

THE DRAMA:

No. 4.

HENRY VIII.

Monday, November 16th.

"THE KING CRIED HA! AT THIS."

THE pomp and splendour which render this play particularly attractive in England, has induced many to suppose its principal merit consists in show and bustle. Doct. Johnson has remarked however, "that the meek sorrow and virtuous distress of Katharine have furnished some scenes which may be justly numbered among the greatest efforts of tragedy. But the genius of Shakespeare comes in and goes out with Katharine." In all general assertions like this, it is not to be expected that the idea conveyed should be unexceptionably constant, but only that it should consist of general and predominant truth.

Certainly few persons would acknowledge the genius of Shakespeare is not displayed in the speeches of Buckingham, before his execution, and in those of *Cardinal Wolsey* in the third act, before and particularly after the loss of the king's favour. But though we find eminently sublime and pathetic passages, though the mind is sometimes wrought to rapture, and sometimes dejected by sorrow in this composition; yet we also can discover numerous defects. The character of Henry eighth, contained no predominant passion which could enchain the attention to its workings, and in his life no event occurred to him, which could serve as the structure of a regular drama. Shakespeare then, by choosing this king for his hero, in fact, lessens his importance, by the consequence which he is obliged to give to the other personages; to Cardinal Wolsey, Queen Katharine and Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury; to say nothing of the duke of Buckingham. The king has none of those mingled passions, which in their conflict render the agent interesting; he is involved in no difficulties, and assailed by no misfortunes. The characters which surround him are, by the sympathy which they excite, the more important personages of the scene. But Shakespeare, while he confers no interest on the character of Henry, has even counteracted the effect arising from the disasters attending the other characters by destroying the unity of action. First, the interest is highly

wrought up for Buckingham, and he is killed very early. then *Wolsey* by his misfortunes excites a lively attention; but at the same time the paramount disasters attending Katharine assail the attention *Wolsey* is soon dismissed from the scene and afterwards Katharine; and then the misfortunes of Cranmer occur. By this multiplication of interest the mind becomes distracted and confused; and is always led away from any attention to Henry, or his proceedings.

This play was evidently acted during the life-time of Queen Elizabeth, and is probably the last of Shakespeare's dramas. There are numerous passages, which evidently could not have found favour in the reign of James first; for the extreme aversion which that prince entertained to the character of his predecessor Henry eighth, would have induced Shakespeare to avoid representing him in flattering colours. This prince was odious, not only to James, but to his subjects and it therefore would have implied presumption in the poet, to have softened the features of his tyranny immediately after his decease; and even in the reign of Elizabeth, it was an arduous attempt, to present a strong resemblance of this king, without alarming the reigning sovereign, or disgusting the spectators. Of the performance of this historical drama, we are not able to bestow great commendation, and yet we are not desirous of hurting the feelings of those, who, to shew them as they truly were, would be rendered completely ridiculous; our silence therefore, shall be the veil of their defects.

Mr. Fennell, in appearing as Cardinal *Wolsey*, added nothing to his high reputation; but on the contrary, sunk below popular expectation. His want of force and animation were never more evidently betrayed; but he sometimes evinced what was worse, a negligence in the text of his author, and great treachery of memory. Those difficult passages in the third Act, which would have shewn the discriminative powers of Mr. F. in which he acknowledges the king's bounty, and asserts his own integrity, he omitted; and afterwards, in the soliloquy, "*Farewell, a long farewell,*" he injured the metaphor of the dream, and entirely forgot the latter part of the speech. A few of the first passages of his very soliloquy were uncommonly well delivered, and our regret was proportionally greater, when he failed in the rest. In some passages he merited applause; his justness of conception, and force of execu-

tion, were never better exemplified, than in the reply to "*Gampeius*:"

"*Heaven's peace be with him!*"

"*That's Christian care enough:—for living*
murmurers,

"*There's places—of rebuke!*" &c.

His "*Yes, surely,*" in the same scene, was highly coloured.

In two passages (at least) Mr. Fennell misrecited his author.

"He parted frowning from me, as if ruin

"*Leap'd from his eyes.*"—Mr. F. read

"*darted.*"

"Let all the *ends* thou aim'st at," &c.

Mr. F. delivered, "let all the *good* thou aim'st at," &c.

The whole soliloquy,

"*It shall be—to the duchess of Alencon—*

"*The French king's sister—he shall marry her,*"

was finely given.

Afterwards, the passage of "*our hard-ruled king,*" was injudiciously omitted.

When the king enters, *Norfolk* says,

"In most strange postures,

"We have seen him set himself," &c.

and then, (if he intended to give any effect to the stage-picture) most unadvisedly omits the consequent lines, which forcibly depict the "*mutiny*" of *Wolsey's* mind, in the *agitated inconstancy* of his gait. Had this necessary induction to the business of the scene been preserved, Mr. F. might have been applauded for the "*citus modo, modo tardus, incessus,*" of Sallust, when describing the guilty perturbation of the mind of Cataline, in the moment of conscientious alarm and apprehension.

"———What's *this*!—to the Pope!

"The *letter*, as I live, with *all the business*

"I went to his holiness!—Nay, then—

FAREWELL!

"I've touch'd the *highest* point of all my greatness,"

was not presented with that critical variation of lineament, that nice disposition of colours, which we expected from Mr. F. His default was, that he wanted transition.

In another passage, he exhibited the very polish of courtly elegance:—

"———if I blush,

"It is to see—a nobleman—want MANNERS."

This was rendered in the very finish of action. The man must have had some intercourse with nobility, who could thus have spoken. He should have read,

"Found *thee* a way, out of *his* wreck, to rise in ;
 "A sure and safe one,—tho' thy *master* miss'd it."

The stress was improperly laid on "*found*," and then all the other aberrations of emphasis followed by necessity. The sense of the passage was not matured.

"———Be JUST, and *fear not* ;
 "Let *all* the ends thou aim'st at, be thy *country's*—
 "Thy *God's*,—and *truth's* !"

The delivery of this sentence, which contains the very essence of the *sentimental sublime*, was altogether inert and unfeathered. It had neither attitude, tone, nor expression. It wanted appropriation of gesture, and truth of sensibility.

Of Mr. F's "*Wolsley*," we are willing to hazard an opinion, that it had not received his usual maturity of reflection; though the play was *wisely* chosen as an argument of attraction, at his benefit. In this we rejoice, that the house was a brilliant and crowded one; and we sincerely wish that the hand of patronage had been extended still wider, to have rewarded, with all its bounty, the exertions, and the talents of so classical and meritorious a performer.

As the concluding words of "*Wolsley*," and many of the important and pathetick passages in the trial and dying scenes of "*Katharine*," have the sanction of history, and are recorded in the annals of the reign of Henry VIII. so the character of the king is derived from the same official source, with this additional advantage, that *tradition* has imparted to it some colours and touches, which have preserved even to this day the very "form and pressure" of his deportment and speech. Hence it is, that Harry still survives in the scene, drawn from the life; and as it were, his *alter self*.

To pursue the metaphor, we received the king from Mr. Caulfield's hands, portrayed in all his drapery; his insignia; his beard, his hat, his gait, his gesture, his utterance, his exclamations; his passions. Scarcely a colour was faded; and we may truly say, the picture was *fresh from the easel*.

But, though Mr. Caulfield deserves this praise, we cannot but censure him for forgetting the dignity of the king, in representing too extravagantly the peculiarities of the man. Without particular care,

the character of Henry will become a royal bully, or jack-pudding. *Booth* is recorded to have been particularly meritorious in this part and was ever eminent for his supporting the dignity of the *prince*, and yet retaining the individuality of the *character*.

Mr. Caulfield and Mr. Fennell paid a very strict regard to the costumes of their respective characters; and the play in general was splendidly and correctly dressed.

Of Queen Katharine by Mrs. Powell, as of all characters personated by this Lady, the outline was so indistinct, so faint; and the colouring so ill combined, that the effect was universal listlessness or inattention. To speak without metaphor, the part wanted animation, and force of utterance; but it was not without tenderness in some scenes. And at the trial, she behaved with dignity and propriety. But what woman can utter the sentiments of Katharine, and not excite some interest? We received from this representation of Mrs. Powell quite as much pleasure, as in candour could have been anticipated. We however can scarcely call from our recollection of her personation more than a single line to censure or to praise. The line

"I do *refuse* you for my judge,"

was improperly uttered. The emphatic word is *you*. On the whole, her performance afforded us but "*lenten entertainment*."

If Mr. Bernard will not discriminate between the deportment of a church dignitary and privy counsellor and that of a cobbler and alehouse jester, he should be reminded that a Boston audience is not equally deficient in correct taste. His personation of the Bishop of Winchester, was as gross a violation of character as ever we witnessed on our boards.

Surry, by Mr. Usher, was boisterous without impression, and acrimonious without acuteness. His *depravation* of the deportment of the noble though enraged son-in-law of Buckingham, gave an admirable and a most unexpected edge, to the keen politeness and *haut ton* of Fennell's retort,

"———if I *blush*,
 "It is to see a *noble* man—want *manners* !"

Mr. Pae, in Norfolk, was courtly in his manners, if he was not perfect in his delivery.

THE DRAMA.

No. 15.

FOR THE EMERALD.

OTHELLO.

Thursday evening, Feb. 18.

WHEN Doct Johnson emphatically remarked, that "the characters of other poets were too often an individual, while those of Shakespeare are commonly a species" he meant no more, than that there was a completeness and truth of nature about them, by which they were recognized to belong to the mass of mankind; and to be governed by principles and motives of conduct of general operation, and not of particular bias. Of the assertion, in its abstract sense, too much is taken for granted; it might as justly be observed, that the characters of other poets are too often imaginary, while those of Shakespeare are observable in life. To delineate a character under the operation of a particular passion, and by the effects of that passion to portray the character, is an attempt, of the difficulty of accomplishing which poets are probably not aware. Modern writers, however, imagining this to be the road to dramatic immortality, pursue it with unabated fervour; the idea is utterly delusive; it is like following a cloud of smoke, in order to discriminate more clearly the objects which it envelops. Shakespeare,

on the contrary, while the principal motives of the story which determine the conduct of his agents, are sufficiently powerful, does not forget to assimilate with them those natural and familiar attributes, by which we acknowledge them to be fellow creatures, and strongly related to ourselves. In no play has this poet discovered this bias of genius in a more tangible shape, than in the play of Othello. The principal characters of this piece, whether we consider them in relation to number, variety, or truth, are so marked by human feelings and motives, that we most cordially hate and detest Iago, sympathise with Othello, and grieve for Desdemona. Of all the productions of Shakespeare, Othello is deserving of the highest rank for vigorous conception, distinction of nature, solidity of judgment, and extent of imagination. Well may it be remarked, that it is "the vivacious offspring of nature impregnated by genius."

The change of characters, by Messrs. Cooper and Fennell, will lead us into a particular observation of the parts of Othello and Iago; and an estimate of Shakespeare's intention, in their delineation.

The character of Othello, governed by ardent passion in all his conduct, whether in love, in jealousy, in hatred, in friendship, in credulity or repentance, requires great compass of voice in the performer. He had his life and being from men of 'royal siege,' was entrusted with the highest command of the Venetian state, and being a man of free and noble nature, and unsuspecting in his attachment, he is fitted both by his temper and station, for the revenge meditated by Iago. Mr. Cooper is fitted for the part by nature; for his voice is clear, sonorous, and capacious, his person symmetrical, and his face expressive. The only fault to be charged against him in general, is his imperfect appreciation of the character he plays, and this of course occasions many inaccuracies of meaning. But this defect is by no means evident in his Othello. In the speech to the Senate, however, there were some mis-recitals of the text; and the hexameter was destroyed in more than four instances in the utterance of it. The line which follows, was marked strangely.

"Which I observing,
"Took (once a pliant hour); and found good means," &c.

He spoke a *pliant hour* as if in a parenthesis; than which nothing can be more opposite to the author's meaning. In reciting this speech there are several distinctions necessary to be observed. Othello introduces into his speech, a story told to Desdemona; that story should be evidently marked; as,

"Still questioned me the *story of my life*,
"*I ran it through.*" &c.

And afterwards,

"That I would *all my pilgrimage dilate*,
"*Whereof by parcels she had something heard*,
"*But not distinctly.*"

And again,

"*My story being done,*" &c.

We think these passages ought to be given in such a tone, as would render them evident.

These lines were erroneously uttered.

"I swear 'tis better to be much *abus'd*
"*Than but to know a little.*"

Mr. Cooper endeavoured to produce an opposition, between *know* and *abus'd*; which in this passage, meant the same thing.

We object to the entrance of Othello, in the last scene, with a *drawn sword*; because no motive is assigned for such an arrangement. On the whole, however, although we could quote numerous imperfect passages, although many expressions were *ranted*, and although others were uttered in a vague manner, we were highly gratified with the Othello of Mr. Cooper.

The costume of this character is not yet decidedly determined; and approving as we do that of Mr. Cooper on Thursday evening, we should hope never to see it performed in any other than such a dress. That Othello was a *christian* there can be but little doubt. That he was general of the Venetian armies, fighting against the Turks, we learn in the Play; and that he never had been in his own country from his early years, but always in the camp, he tells us himself, therefore we conceive the dress of a Venetian officer, is most to be preferred for the character of the *Moor*.

The character of Iago, as a theatrical part, is perhaps to be preferred to that of Othello; but as the representation of life, it affords so melancholy a picture of the depravity of our race, that we turn from

it with hatred and disgust. It seems that jealousy in Iago is the principal inducement to his revenge on Othello; and by means of jealousy he brings about his purposes; thus, in one instance, the cause and effect are the same thing. Iago is poor besides, and though he hates him as he does "hell's pains," yet, for *necessity of present life*, he is obliged to follow the Moor. He is avaricious; he cajoles Roderigo for his money, and abuses Cassio for his place.

The malignity of Iago, however, could hardly be reconciled with probability; but that we often see instances of loathing and hate, which men bear to each other, for which no cause can be assigned, but predisposition to entertain malignant disgust. Iago must appear a different man before Roderigo and Othello and all his disguise must be taken off when alone.

He suggests himself with *heavenly show* to Othello; he uses Roderigo with less ceremony, declaring *himself* a villain; but at the same time flattering *his* vanity, by the insinuation that he can easily compress his designs on Desdemona. When by himself, we have something different still; he is "black as night, and his affections dark as Erebus." The performer who undertakes Iago, should be aware of these distinctions, and endeavour to show this difference of nature, whenever the slightest opportunity occurs.

Mr. Fennell's idea of the part was correct; but his execution was not always commensurate with it. Besides, the outline was not properly filled up, by reason of the omission of some long passages of peculiar importance. There were, however, some admirable readings, which differed from any we had before received.

"The moor - *howbeit* that I endure him
"not" -

"If this poor *brach* of Venice, whom I trace
"For his *quick* hunting stand the *putting* on,
"I'll have," &c.

"For *M chae!* Cassio, I dare be sworn;
"I think that he is honest."

But we conceive he wanted impression, where he endeavours to persuade Roderigo to follow the wars, and *put money* in *his purse*; for in respect to *him*, the *money* was the primary consideration. The soliloquies were in general, uncommonly well delivered; but we think the part, as a whole, wanted animation.

Mrs. Stanley gained credit for her per-

formance of Desdemona; and her speech
to the senate was very judiciously and
feelingly pronounced.

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THE DRAMA.

No. 12.

FOR THE EMERALD.

RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE.

Wednesday evening, January 27th.

THE plot of "Rule a Wife and have a Wife," was borrowed from a novel of Cervantes. The play was written by Fletcher, unassisted by Beaumont, and is now, if we except the plays of Shakespeare, the most popular of any production written at so early a period of Eng-

lish literature. It was second in succession to the Humorous Lieutenant, which piece was played at the original opening of Drury Lane Theatre, in 1663. Beaumont and Fletcher united, wrote fifty-three dramatic pieces; and the wonder is not that so few of them have maintained possession of the stage; but that any of them should remain upon it, debased as they are by immorality, vulgarity, and licentiousness. These writers undoubtedly have produced many splendid passages, but not one play, which, if performed as originally composed, would be heard to the conclusion. These authors were either envious of the reputation of Shakespeare, or the distinctions of rank at that period, were so nicely observed, that it would have degraded them to have noticed him; for in the second folio edition of his works, among four or five pages of panegyrical effusions, we cannot find the names of either Beaumont or Fletcher. The one, however, was son to the Bishop of London, and the father of the other, was Judge of an English Court.

We imagine the comedy of "Rule a Wife and have a Wife," preserves a respectable station on the English stage, because it contains some of the most striking incidents in comedy, rather than from any opinion entertained of its nicety of plot, morality of principle, or character of dialogue.—Indeed the language is often debased, vulgar, and general; the circumstances are sometimes unnecessary, and sometimes incongruous, and the conduct of the story is wanting in dramatic unity. Since we can discover in this play no traits of that consummate excellence which consecrate the renown of Shakespeare, we presume it is generally exhibited, to show the striking contrast contained in the character of Leon, the peculiar humour of the copper Captain, and the "jade's tricks" of Estifania.

The character of Leon, Perez, and Estifania, have been filled at various periods by the most respectable performers that ever lived. Mahon, Hart, and Mrs. Boutel, in very early, and Garrick, Woodward, and Mrs Pritchard, in succeeding times, have conferred importance on the parts by the greatness of their talents. And since then, the most distinguished histrionic names have been added to the list. Indeed without eminently good performance, the play would sink into insignificance, or excite displeasure. On the American stage

the names of Cooper, Harwood, and Mrs. Stanley, are sufficiently distinguished to be no improper successors to such parts and to such performers.

The success of Mr. Cooper in the character of Leon, we believe, has induced him to consider it one of his most capital exertions of talent. And we are willing to confess, we never have witnessed in the general expression of a character more propriety; in a change of apparent disposition, more contrast, and in the various exterior requisites, more personal endowments, than are evinced by Mr Cooper in his representation of Leon. After this acknowledgement, we wish we could say his accuracy of emphasis and elocution bore any proportion of excellence to his action and deportment. Particular passages, though uttered with spirit and animation, were greatly defective in pronunciation.

His repetition of Margarita's expression—

"I do command ye from me, thou poor fellow,

"Thou *cozen'd* fool,"

we think conveyed an erroneous idea, Leon replies with manly dignity,

"Thou *cozen'd* fool!"

"I will *not* be commanded."

Mr. Cooper converts the expression into a sneer, of which we do not see the propriety;

"Thou *cozen'd* fool."

Leon certainly would not *boast* of *cozening* Margarita, before her face, much less when in the same play he says he has practised no dishonourable artifice.

We thought we could discover in the following passage an error.

"Will your grace but honour me,
And taste our dinner? *All anger's past, I hope,*
And I shall serve ye."

The words marked are evidently a rhetorical parenthesis, and should have been so delivered; but Mr. C—— pronounced them in a tone in no respect differing from a tone of invitation. We observed an inaccurate utterance of this sentence.

"He that dares strike against the husband's *freedom*,

"The husband's *curse* stick to him."

Mr. Cooper marked *husband's* in the first and second line, without noticing the word *freedom*. But we turn from further

censure to willing praise. The phrases, "Sir, you are a gentleman," "Mine own humanity will teach me that, Sir;" were uncommonly well uttered.

In the first indications of change, and afterwards, until the complete revolution of the character, Mr. Cooper discovered a great degree of science in his profession, and complete knowledge of effect.

Though Mr. Harwood is a performer new to the Boston Stage, he has been much esteemed in the southern cities of this Continent, as a chaste and excellent comedian. Our attention was therefore much interested to witness his performance of Michael Perez, as being a character of high standing in the comic drama. We derived from it much pleasure, and felt some disappointment. Our disappointment however arose from his inaccuracy in the text rather than in his conception of the part. The rapidity of his utterance confounds the necessary distinction of idea, to produce the effect proposed. In the description of his lodgings, we lost the force of many of the epithets, and allusions, from their being too much blended in the pronunciation; and sometimes from inaccurate emphasis. The ancient dramatic writings demand more caution in utterance, in proportion as the language is more obscure.

There were several judicious points of discrimination observable in the part; it was restrained in extravagance, and on the whole it was performed to the general satisfaction of the audience. Of the performance of the rest of the male characters, being unimportant in themselves, we pass over it without particular notice or distinction.

The character of Estifania, as performed by Mrs. Stanley, was almost destitute of the agreeable. And this we attribute to the drawling, sing-song manner of her playing, which, though she has often been reminded of it, she has not corrected, and which is sure to destroy the effect of every character it pervades. More especially is it to be avoided in comedy, which will not admit of any quality, so opposite to vivacity as a drawl. Abstracted from this prevalent defect, the part was well comprehended, and uttered with general propriety. She was perhaps too broad in her licentious deportment, and in her humour in repeating the word "Captain;" but the jewel scene, so to speak, displayed much scenic management, and evinced great

merit. From among some instances of false emphasis which were observable, we shall notice the following; and close our remarks on her performance with the observation, that there was more in it to be praised than censured.

"Here comes another trout, that I must tickle."

This line is as badly marked as possible. Another was the only word on which any peculiar stress ought to be laid.

Mrs. Usher, as Margarita, was defective, as well in costume, as in conception and utterance. The early English writers seem above her reach.

As the scene of this play lies in Spain, and the frequent allusions to the war in Holland mark its chronology with great precision, we were a little surprised to observe so many violations of costume in our motley group of performers. The Spanish habiliments of that day are, we think, better known, than the modern fashions in Bond street. But the American stage, we presume, claims an exemption from historical correctness, by the right of prescription, by a sort of *quidlibet videndi* by whose agency the incongruously diversified dresses of all ages and nations are crowded into one play, like wild beasts of the field into the ark, and a feather from all the birds in the air is added by way of codicil to grace them!

We object to the dress, being in modern English, because there is no propriety or reason for the arrangement; but at all events let the fashion be *unique*. The appearance of the characters should indicate that they belong to the same age and country.

The play passed off with considerable *eclat*, and the three principal performers received, as they in general deserved, "great largesses" of approbation.

THE DRAMA.

O'erflung to his magic power,
The thunder growls, the heavens lour;
And to his darkened throne repair
The demons of the deep, and spirits of the air.

UNDINE.

THE new melodrama of "Undine, or the Spirit of the Waters," is becoming quite popular; and, we are bound to say, deservedly so. It is one of the best of that class of dramatic compositions, of which the "Forty Thieves" stands at the head. The author has been peculiarly happy in giving to airy nothings

"A local habitation and a name."

Some of those extravagant vagaries of such luxuriant imaginations as have existed in almost every age and climate, are here concentrated in a very interesting little story. The eye is delighted with a spectacle grand and imposing, while the heart recognises forms and incidents familiar to the days of its nursery amusements. We cannot witness the representation of such a piece with languor or indifference; and, therefore, venture to pronounce it an exquisite relaxation from the fatigues of business and study. As a drama, it is not of the family of *legitimates*; but what then, who has not experienced the truth of that good old couplet, that

"A little nonsense, now and then,
Is relished by the wisest men."

Undine is the production of Mr. Soane; who, in his various dramatic works, gives ample evidence of a mind of no ordinary capacity. We would give a brief history or description of the plot; but believing it would lessen much of the pleasure which "tiptoe curiosity" enjoys at its representation, we forbear. Let it suffice, that the author has taken a bold flight, uniting in his action mortals and immortals, material and supernatural agency; making in its ingenious combinations one of the most brilliant and gratifying spectacles ever witnessed in our theatre.

This is the language of a morning paper, with which we perfectly coincide:

"The managers were evidently sanguine on its power of attraction, as no effort or expense has been spared in its production. The scenery throughout is splendid and appropriate, and the peculiar costume of dresses, &c. was admirably judicious.

"Undine, the heroine, is a character difficult to define; though herself mortal, she equally arrests the love of the grim Kühleborn the Water-King, and the gallant knight, Sir Hulbrand. The Rosicrucian seer is her mysterious protector against the arts of Kühleborn, who is aided by a goblin spirit of the "Gilpin Homer" class, who at pleasure is either mortal or a "goblin-fiend." This opposition of the representations of the two elements, fire and water, aided by their separate attributes, affords powerful scope for the talents of the painter and mechanist, which are most happily exercised.

"The most striking scenes in the piece are one in which the tributary waters of Kühleborn, are called forth by his sprite emissary, to impede the union or meeting of Undine with Sir Hulbrand. The waters are made to rush tempestuously across the stage, producing an effect never before attempted on our boards.

"The other scene, which peculiarly arrested attention and surprise, and was greeted by the audience with simultaneous shouts of approbation, was the instantaneous conversion of the crystal and coral palace of the Water King into the flaming regions of his opponent, the Fire Monarch.—The effect was electrical.

"The piece throughout is original, and poetical in its construction, and delightful from its wild singularity.

"Miss Johnson looked and proved in Undine, like a "spirit of light," almost equivocal whether of mortal mould, or of ethereal quality, admirably delineating the intention of her author.

"The deformed imp of mischief and malignity, an extremely difficult and peculiar assumption, was very well sustained by Mr. Reed; as was indeed every part throughout the piece.—It cannot fail to prove highly attractive."

Saturday, Nov. 29.—This evening was presented the comedy of She would and She would not, with the melo-drama of the Two Galley Slaves.

Monday, Dec. 1.—The comedy of Wild Oats, or the Strolling Gentleman; interlude of Matrimony; and the farce of Frightened to Death. Rover, Delaval, and Phantom, Mr. De Camp.

Tuesday, 2.—Rendezvous; Undine; and the Duel.

Wednesday, 3.—The Dramatist; Sylvester Dag-gerwood; and Hit or Miss. Vapid, Sylvester, and Dick Cipher, Mr. De Camp.

Thursday, 4.—Is he Jealous; Undine; and the Agreeable Surprise.

THE DRAMA- FOR THE PORT FOLIO.

Dread o'er the scene, the ghost of Hamlet stalks;
 Othello rages, poor Monimia mourns;
 And Belvidera ours her soul in love.
 Terror alarms the breast; the comely tear
 Steals o'er the cheek; or else the Comic Muse
 Holds to the world a picture of itself,
 And raises, sly, the fair impartial laugh.
 Sometimes she lifts her strain, and paints the scenes
 Of beauteous life; whate'er can deck mankind
 Or charm the heart, in generous Bevil show'd.

Letter from a gentleman on a visit in Philadelphia, to his friend in Boston

DEAR S.

You have so often seen the drama in perfection, that you will not perhaps feel great curiosity upon the subject of one comparatively in its infancy. Yet I should do great injustice to the merits of the Philadelphia stage, and not less to my own feelings which have been highly gratified by its representations, were I to omit the theatre in giving you an account of the different objects of curiosity and interest here. A stranger naturally seeks amusement in public places; and my curiosity at first, and satisfaction afterwards, have frequently led me to pass an evening at what they call the "New Theatre." The term is not very appropriate to a house of near twenty years standing, but is intended I believe, in a comparative sense, to distinguish it from an old red ruin in the lower part of the town, which would serve as an apt representation of Noah's ark, or the original barn of the first strolling company. In a letter from poor Cooke to Incledon, which was published in England, and afterwards in our newspapers, he expressed an agreeable surprize at the ad-

vancement of theatricals in America. I suspect most foreigners would feel similar sentiments, although they might not have the honesty to avow them, on visiting the theatre in this city. The company is sufficiently large to fill, with good effect, most of the plays now in vogue, and is certainly selected with a judgment and employed with a discrimination equally creditable to the managers and the actors. There are indeed no Cookes—and I have enthusiasm enough on that subject to believe that there are not many even within the limits of Covent Garden or Drury Lane. But whoever goes to the play with a rational expectation of amusement and instruction, will, nine times in ten, not be disappointed. As you have witnessed the earlier efforts of some of the company, I will inform you, so far as my observation has enabled me to judge, of their respective merits and reputation.

Messrs. Warren and Wood, who, if we may estimate their exertions by the good order and discipline of their corps, are unwearied in their efforts to conduct the machine with satisfaction to the public and credit to themselves, are no less eminently successful in their professional departments. The former of these gentlemen is, in a pretty extensive range of parts, an excellent actor. A grave, deep-toned, and sonorous voice, a lively sensibility, and a uniform correctness of perception, give him many advantages in the representation of *tragic* characters of an advanced age; but his old gentlemen in comedy,—his Baron Duberlys, Sir Peter Teazles, and Sir Abel Handys, I am told are inimitable: and from the specimens I have seen, I do not doubt the fact. His fellow manager, Mr. Wood, is also a greater favourite of the comic than the tragic Muse: for although uniformly respectable, yet there are so many people without intrinsic merit, who can bustle through a hero's ravings with ten times more noise than he, that half the world, having no standard, would conclude them to be better actors. But to play the gentleman, is so difficult a task, because it is an object always in view, that when it is well done, and universally applauded, it must have great merit. In this, Mr. Wood particularly excels;—an easy, natural deportment, neither too stiff, nor too forward, distinguishes the performances of this gentle-

man from those of every other I have seen. Great actors generally play the hero, even in the drawing-room, instead of exhibiting an unaffected politeness, which is at open war with strut and rant. A young man named Duff, has excited much attention and applause: he has a fine, full, excellent voice, which has great compass, melody, and strength. In imitation he is most powerful: but is without the charms of grace and ease. He is now the subject of curiosity and observation; and merits, from his continued exertions and unwearied attention to business, much praise, but will never, I think, make a great actor. Mr. Duff is almost the only male performer who appears to have a greater predilection and predisposition for tragedy than comedy. The rest of the company are all greater favourites, and appear to more advantage in the sock than the buskin. In Jefferson, the public are possessed of a never-failing fund of drollery. He unites perhaps as many requisites for a comic actor, as any man living;—is active—witty—intelligent—correct—and has a store of spirits and humour that seems incapable of being exhausted. Blisset and Francis, you must remember to have seen many years ago. Time has not shorn them of a beam of merit, nor age diminished their inclination to please. Of the female department, gallantry would have prompted me to speak first; but the fair sex is, you know, the never-failing but-end of a string of toasts, and if it be true that wine opens the heart, they enjoy, at least, the most cordial situation; and though last, are not least in love. Mrs. Whitlock, whom you must remember, has just closed an engagement, which she fulfilled with undiminished reputation, and with all that ardour and spirit, for which I am told she was formerly so remarkable. Mrs. Wood is an excellent actress. Without great power, or extreme sweetness of voice, she reads with a correctness, and performs with a spirit which justly entitle her to a distinguished reputation. I have seen Mrs. Mason only in comedy; and the liveliness with which she contrives to fill every part she undertakes, her perpetual animation and charming affability, prevent me from wishing to see her in any thing else. There is an affectionate playfulness in her manner that is delightful: and the ease of her deportment peculiarly adapts her for a most interesting and difficult depart-

ment of the drama, the delivery of an epilogue. In this Mrs. Mason is eminently successful; and the man who can listen to her on such an occasion, without more emotion than usual, has feelings that I should not be disposed to covet. Mrs. Duff is extremely handsome, but not sufficiently possessed of herself on the stage to seem perfectly easy. Mrs. Green's personal attractions are also considerable; and her performances, though not of the highest order, are by no means indifferent.

I have thus run over the names of the most conspicuous of the Philadelphia *dramatis personæ*: and I think you would agree with me in saying, that although they may not rival a London company, yet for an audience of moderate expectations, sufficient merit is found among them, to "hold the mirror up to nature."

The friend and correspondent to whom we owe the above communication, is so well qualified by taste and education to appreciate the merits of the drama, that if his letters were longer, both ourselves and the public would be spared the attempt to fill up his vigorous though rapid outline. But the exertions of the players have contributed so often to our amusement, that we should deem ourselves deficient in gratitude if we did not bear a willing testimony, in favour of an establishment, which though often unkindly assailed by its enemies and denounced as poisoning the public morals, is in our deliberate estimation, the most harmless if not the most useful of all the modes of public amusement.

The theatre for the present winter is on a very respectable footing.—We doubt indeed whether at this moment there is so good a company in Great Britain except on the London stage, and the comparison might be extended advantageously to nearly all the provincial theatres of the continent. But their theatrical corps is chiefly devoted to the service of the laughing muse. For the higher purposes of tragedy they possess fewer materials, they have most of the gods and goddesses but no Jupiter; no one who can wield the thunders of the stage—and on the first emergency the property man may safely sell out all the daggers, and the whole machinery of storms, and nail up the trap doors for

the winter. The managers would probably be gainers by such a sacrifice, for the few who might be disposed to regret it would be easily reclaimed from their sober sadness by the merriment of the company, which is really strong in comic powers. Of Warren who is almost the *doyen* of American actors, we cheerfully repeat the praise so justly awarded by our correspondent—and we may add, what is certainly no ordinary eulogium, and what we are not disposed to say of either Cooke or Kemble, that we never saw him perform badly—Mr. Wood has long been a favourite of ours, and we have always lamented to see him when the thinness of his ranks has obliged him to volunteer on services to which nature has not destined him. He was never made for tragedy, and though he may sometimes succeed in characters of that description when judgment and correctness, and discrimination are alone wanting, yet he has not a tragic frame nor tragic lungs to bear him through the boisterous declamation of Rolla, and personages of that class. His proper sphere is the higher departments of gay and genteel comedy; a wide and ample circuit which he always treads with satisfaction. The career which he should mark for himself ought to be like that of the veteran Lewis, who has left, we believe, no legitimate successor on the English stage—and whom Mr Wood follows, we will not say at a long distance, though much remains to be done before the resemblance can be complete. It is no small merit of this actor that he always dresses with great taste and propriety, and though we have sometimes observed a small remnant of stiffness when in full dress, yet we have rarely seen a better representation of a man of fashion in his morning or negligent costume. To characters like these we should wish to see him devoted. His part is that of a gay, lively, well bred gentleman, which we have often seen him perform with success, and which his friends assert, it requires no change to assume.

Of the stranger, Mr. Duff, from our limited opportunities of observation, we had formed more auspicious omens than our correspondent. He has obviously much of ease and elegance to acquire. Of the three Singles we imagine his sir Pertinax cost him by far the least labour—and our American ears are not yet

completely satisfied with his accent. But he is bounteously gifted by nature—his person, voice, and features are of a high cast for the stage; and when experience shall have given more flexibility to his figure, and softened his austere and measured intonations, he need not despair of attaining the highest theatrical honours. We are the more willing to trust our hopes of his future eminence, since he has outgrown our disappointment on his first appearance, and is, we think, already visibly improved since the last winter.

There is one of the performers whose career we have regarded with considerable interest. We allude to Mr. Barret. It was his misfortune to have been "beroscius'd" at an early age, and to have excited expectations which even far higher powers could not have realized, so that his admirers should reproach themselves rather than him if they are disappointed in his advancement. There was an altar we believe at Athens to Impudence. We wish that Mr. Barret could be persuaded to worship at such a shrine. There is a diffidence in his manner—a kind of conviction that the eyes of the audience are upon him, which prevents the full expansion of his talents, and will be fatal to his improvement unless he conquers it totally. It is this sentiment which makes him appear desirous of getting off the stage so soon, and gives to all his actions a boyishness quite inconsistent with his own character and that which he personates. In the part of sir Frederick Fellamore, for instance, instead of the dashing impudence of a hardened seducer, which the occasion required, Mr. Barret showed almost the innocent timidity and hesitation of sixteen. We do not exhort him to be "bloody, bold, and resolute;" but we seriously wish that he would take more upon himself and come out, as the phrase is, and instead of acting in profile, as heretofore, take a stronger hold of the character, and not be prevented from occupying the stage at his ease, by an apprehension of criticism. If he will only do himself justice—the public will do him honour.

Our correspondent has not overrated the merit of Jefferson. We sometimes recollect with surprise, that the actor whose

comic powers struck us more forcibly than any we have ever seen was a German, an individual of a nation to which we do not willingly allow a large share of humour. But we might safely put Jefferson by the side of Brunet, the hero of the Montansier, and the delight of the laughing world in France—or Liston and Matthews, who divide the applause of London. Of these two last, Liston's vein of humour is, we think, the best—there is a rich dryness about it—and he has a fine command over all the gradations of folly from silliness to stupidity, which is exquisite.—Jefferson attempts almost every species of humour, and scarcely ever fails, except when he endeavours to give a broadness and burlesque to a few characters which require more delicate discrimination. For instance, we were disappointed in his Tony Lumpkin, from which we had anticipated great entertainment: but the finesse of the character seemed to have escaped him. This however rarely happens—and if he would confine himself more to his text, and above all, if he would indulge less in oaths, he would leave us little to wish in any department within his sphere.

This last remark applies to another of the actors, Mr. Francis, with much greater force. Whatever be his character, grave or gay, magistrate or clown, he seems to think swearing essential to his success. Now this is at best a poor resource—and in his case quite superfluous, for he is a very good performer and does not require such aid to excite a great deal of merriment.

There is a vein of drollery which lies very low under ground, but which is admirably rich when discovered. It belongs to Blisset. It is seen in Launcelot Gobbo and Apollo Belvi; but is most apparent in exquisite representations of the lower classes of the French.—He has a fine French accent which colours the deception, and we are often tempted by his characteristic drollery to tell him as Voltaire did the poetical barber through a whole letter. *Faites des perruques, faites des perruques*,—to be always a French barber, or a valet de chambre.

To our correspondent's remarks on the engaging sweetness of Mrs. Wood, and the charming vivacity of Mrs. Mason, we add our hearty assent, nor should we deny to Mrs. Francis, in a dif-

ferent line, great applause, for the spirit and humour with which, if we may venture the expression, she has *so long* entertained the town.

In the decorations of the theatre, the management of scenes, and the general machinery of the stage, it is not surprising if we are more deficient than the older and richer cities of Europe. In these matters London is about fifty years behind Paris, and we may be content to be some distance from those who have more means than ourselves. This difference is not however very remarkable or very distressing. If, as will sometimes happen, half a house encounters half a forest, they are soon amicably separated; and if in the midst of a palace two dirty sceneshifters are seen each laying down his board, it is only an agreeable incongruity, which might as well be spared.

We have often indulged ourselves with observing that the audience acted their part as well as the performers. There is, generally speaking, a great spirit of decency presiding over the public assemblages of this country. We remember that a foolish traveller abuses the people of America for disorderly behaviour at theatres; and cites, with much reprobation, the conduct of a particular disturber of the peace. This individual, for whom the nation was rebuked for its insubordination and ill manners, happened to be a countryman of the very traveller himself—so it is nine times out of ten, with similar reproaches. If it were indeed possible to make those most hostile to theatres, witnesses of the decorum which prevails in our own, it might disarm their resentment, and teach them how much better it is, that the leisure of a great city should be thus amused, than wasted in follies, or disgraced by vices of a far more offensive character.

We trust therefore that the managers may meet with the success which their exertions merit. The talents of the company will sufficiently direct their selection of pieces to comedies of sterling humour, and these with a rare tragedy for those who insist on a right to cry, and an occasional horse or two for the use and behoof of the gallery, will not fail to amuse the town and enrich the performers.

THE DRAMA.

OTHELLO.

THOSE persons who when they visit the Theatre, hope to see Shakespeare's Dramas exhibited upon the stage exactly as they peruse them in the closet, indulge expectations which never can be gratified, and anticipate excellencies that they never can enjoy. All the represented plays of this great bard are considerably altered, mutilated, or retrenched by different hands, and none of them are personated exactly as they are found in the regular editions. The length of the plays, the obscurity of some scenes, the unnecessary introduction of others, and the obvious want of connexion with the story, which some of the long speeches evince, are some of the reasons which have conspired to produce the retrenchments to which we have just alluded. Many excellent passages, therefore, are omitted in the representation, which delight in the perusal, and the beauty of others destroyed by willfulness, negligence, ignorance, or temerity. King Lear was altered by Tate, Richard the 3d. by Cibber, Macbeth by Sir William Davenant, other plays by the Theatre, and Othello by J. P. Kemble.

Of all the productions of Shakespeare, perhaps Othello deserves the highest rank for the powerful delineation of distinct features of character. Other writers seem to devote their attention to produce a plot, which shall first proceed with regular gradations of perplexity, and at last be as regularly developed; but Shakespeare, without regarding the probability of the mere stories in which his characters are introduced, bestows on them a completeness of nature and an association of familiar attributes so remarkable, that we

immediately acknowledge them to be fellow creatures and strongly allied to the great mass of mankind.

The character of Othello, governed by ardent passion in all his conduct, whether in love, in jealousy, friendship, credulity, repentance, or revenge ; having his life and being from men of "royal seige," entrusted with the highest command in the Venetian state, is fitted both by his temper and his station, to become the victim of Iago's insidious villany and diabolical hatred.

The town expressing great anxiety to witness Mr. Cooke's personation of Iago, were not less solicitous that he should be well supported in the character, and therefore were extremely desirous that the part of Othello should be sustained by a performer, whose figure should be adapted to the personation, and whose talents should afford earnest of his success in the attempt. They almost universally hoped that Mr. Morse, who had been so long soliciting an engagement from the managers without success, should be allowed to undertake this character ; the pretensions of Mr. Duff, however, interfered with the reasonableness of his claim ; but at length a compromise was effected by which, each actor had an opportunity to distinguish his talents in the noble Moor. We do not wish to establish an invidious distinction between the talents of these gentlemen, as exhibited in this character ; but we cannot help observing in general, that though Mr. Duff appears to possess many capabilities as an actor, and indeed performs some light comic characters with great effect, yet his talents for imperial tragedy are limited, his judgment wants maturity, his action characteristic propriety, and his voice a temperate management. We utter this from a sincere desire to promote Mr. Duff's *ultimate* reputation, and we recommend to him to take especial care not to suffer his naturally excellent voice to relapse into a *singing drawl*, or *whine*, to which it is remarkably prone ; at the same time to be less *redundant* in his action, to curb his disposition for the bombastic, and restrain the rapid motion of his arms and legs. As to his performance of Othello, we conceive he mistook several of the finest passages, particularly in the last scene : his speech to the senate and general deportment with Iago, (had not Mr. Duff too strongly evinced the defects which we

have just mentioned) were not deficient either in force or propriety. On the whole, however, the character was a failure ; and certain beauties of personation formed no counterpoise, whilst reiterated errors

“ Filled one scale,

“ Triumphant justice sitting on the beam.”

Of Mr. Morse's personation, it is not too much to declare, that it was an highly respectable first attempt ; not evincing, perhaps, the passionate force of Cooper's delineation, or the critical readings of Fennel, yet combining such a degree of both as to command equal respect and applause. The speech of Othello before the senate, was impaired by an omission of some of the finest lines,

“ Wherein I spake of most *disasterous* chances
Of moving accidents by *flood* and *field* ;
Of hair breadth 'scapes i' the imminent-*deadly* breach,
Of being taken by the *insolent* foe,
And sold to *slavery* ; of my *redemption* thence, &c.

We cannot stop to urge certain specific objections to several of the readings ; but whilst alluding to them we cannot forbear to acknowledge that we noticed several which were at once original and bold. The usual method of quelling the brawl, should in our opinion be altered ; Othello should *himself* part the combatants. This is indicated by Iago's speech afterwards to Othello,

“ When I came back

(For this was brief,) I found them both together,
At blow and thrust ; even as *again* they were
When you *yourself* did part them.

A few words may fairly be suggested as to the costume of Othello, and which has not been decisively determined. That Othello was a christian, there is little doubt ; of which his exclamation “ are we turned Turks !” is a pretty clear indication. That he was a *Venetian* general, who hated the *Mahomedans*, and was fighting against them, we learn in the play ; and that he had never been in his own country from his earliest years, but always in a camp, he tells himself ; therefore we conceive the dress of a *Venetian* captain is most to be preferred for the part of the Moor.

The success which attended Mr. Morse on the present occasion, reflects an indirect censure upon the managers, for suffering his merits to remain neglected during the whole season ; and indeed it composes no small part of his pretensions, that Mr. Morse is an *American*, and therefore may prefer his claim to an engagement, with much more confidence than if he was an alien to the country. And certainly, his talents, to say the least, are equal to any member of our present theatrical corps.

It appears that jealousy in *Iago*, is the principal inducement to revenge upon *Othello*, and by means of jealousy, he effects his purposes ; thus in one instance the cause and the effect are the same thing. *Iago* is poor besides, and though he hates him as he does " hell's pains," yet, for *necessity of present life*, he is obliged to follow the Moor. He cajoles Roderigo for his money, and abuses Cassio for his place. The performer of *Iago* must appear a different man to *Othello* and Roderigo, and all his disguise must be removed when alone. He suggests himself with "*heavenly show*" to *Othello* ; he uses *Roderigo* with less ceremony, declaring *himself* a villain ; but at the same time flattering the fool's vanity by the insinuation that he can easily compass his designs on *Desdemona*. When by himself, he becomes " as black as night and his affections dark as Erebus."

Mr. Cooke's personation of *Iago* was eminently characteristic ; his discrimination and judgment, we have never seen more strikingly exhibited. In the soliloquies, his manner is beyond all praise. We think Mr. Cooke's utterance of the passage beginning,

She that was ever fair and never proud, &c.

was as striking an instance of the advantages to be derived from the preservation of the rising inflection of voice, as Mr. Walker could possibly have selected. The scenes with *Othello* in which the passion of jealousy is infused into his mind, were throughout conducted by a judgment that never failed, and an execution that never was surpassed. The acting however in the last scene, after *Iago* determines not to speak again, we imagine is a point of excellence which was never exceeded on the English stage. The look of triumphant malignity which Mr. Cooke gave *Othello* upon

his exit, sealed the character with the stamp of masterly excellence. It would be endless to point out to admiration the particular beauties of conception and execution, which are so conspicuously displayed by this performer.

We conclude our panegyric with some lines from an admired American poet.

So rare in one these varying gifts unite,
Our country thought to "die without the sight."
Myriads indeed, with high theatric rage,
Or mere mechanic art, can stalk the stage ;
Can leave their author's meaning on the shelf,
And find a substitute in sapient self ;
Till broad burlesque too plainly shows his face,
And struggling laughter bids grief give him place ;
While poor Melpomene, o'ercome with shame,
Disowns the changeling that assumed her name.
But he who wears his author deep enshrin'd,
Joins heart to heart, and mixes mind with mind ;
Feels as he wrote, enforces all he taught,
Quickens perception, and embodies thought !
Bear witness, TRUTH ! scarce such an one appears
Within the circuit of an hundred years.

THE DRAMA.

—Whilst the Drama bows to Virtue's cause,
To aid her precepts and enforce her laws,
So long the just and generous will befriend,
And triumph on her efforts still attend. Brooks

THEATRICAL COSTUME.

THE admirable manner in which Matthews gives the character of old Methusalem, without any other change of dress than a scratch wig, must convince every one who has beheld him, that it is very possible to represent old men on the stage without adopting the preposterous costume almost universally employed on such occasions, which is so very extravagant as absolutely to destroy the illusion it is intended to assist. Thus, instead of being natural, the actor becomes grotesquely ridiculous, and caricatures merely because he cannot imitate. Instead of giving the impress of senility to gesture, voice, countenance,—in short, to his whole person,—he satisfies himself with putting on a full wig well powdered, square-toed shoes and buckles, a cocked hat, laced coat with huge sleeves, and flapped waistcoat, and with perpetually tottering and hobbling about; in short, he produces a mere chimera—a character of convention, in which it is impossible to recognise one single trait of real life. If, in the comedy of the Clandestine Marriage, modern costume is adopted for the other characters, it is grossly absurd to see Lord Ogleby dressed in the fashion of at least half a century ago, thus affecting age rather than juvenility of appearance. If there must be somewhat *outré* in his dress, let it be on the contrary side, and let him be distinguished by the extreme *recherché* of modern elegance; let there be the utmost solicitude to conceal all appearance of age. But then it will be asked, if so dressed, how will it be possible for the actor to convey the idea of age. For the genuine actor it will not only be very possible, but it will exhibit his consummate art to much greater advantage than can be done according to the present wretched and bungling method, which reminds us of the dauber who was forced to write, 'this is a lion.' If, indeed, the performer can do nothing better, even let him adopt the practice of the artist just mentioned, and appear with a label on his neck, inscribed *this is an*

old man, It would be quite as humorous and not at all more extravagant than the shift now restored to. In real life we behold the very reverse of this: there we frequently see a most sedulous affectation of superior elegance of dress, and of a fashionable exterior, in those who are no longer young; and, although this to a certain extent subdues, it certainly does not destroy, the character of age. The general air of the person, which betrays itself through all the disguise, is so widely different from that of youth, that it cannot for a single moment be mistaken. It is these marks that the actor ought to endeavour to assume, that he should study and imitate, and not trust to an antiquated wardrobe, which looks like the refuse of some Jew-broker's shop. Such spectre-looking dresses, which seem as if they came from the shades, to haunt the descendants of their former wearers, are to us any thing but comic—they tell a tale of times gone by. Could we imagine that so grave a body as the Society of Antiquaries were ever to be found within the walls of a theatre, we should suppose that these curious relics were intended as a compliment to their taste for the venerable and obsolete, and introduced for the purpose of delighting their learned eyes. But we much doubt whether this be really the case, and can, therefore, only attribute it to a disregard of propriety and common sense, and to the exceedingly vulgar error of supposing that absurdity and extravagance constitute comic humour.

All that we have been saying applies with equal force to the costume of female characters. We wish that we could prevail on the ancient dowagers and old maids of the stage, to discard their powdered *têtes*, high-crowned caps, long waists, stomachers, high-heeled shoes, flowered silk gowns, and other antique habiliments, for something more resembling the exterior of the antiquated belles and portly matrons that we meet with in the actual world. Pray, ladies, exhibit to us for once a wrinkled cadaverous countenance, set off by glossy jet-black ringlets, just fresh from the perruquier's, or the more than graceful enbonpoint of fifty rendered absurd merely by the affectation of display. But we suppose that not one of you imagines she can ever look old, except it be by assuming a most fantastic disguise. Yet surely there would be no extraordinary danger in making the experiment; we would, therefore, advise you, instead of ransacking your old lumber-boxes, or consulting the plates of Bell's British Theatre, to take the advice of some fashionable milliner, or even, with all respect be it spoken, to take a glance and a lesson at the boxes before you. Look for a moment at the poor, pale, sickly-looking lady, who seems to think that her with-

ered person has a certain syph-like air, that he is determined to display to the best advantage. Further on sits a goodly matron of some sixty summers, whose cheek has yet a sunny hue, and whose extreme *recherché* of dress indicates very plainly that she does not desire to pass for a fright; but think you that an eye of the least experience would mistake her for forty or even fifty. And would to heaven, mesdames, that your theory, or at least what we infer to be such, was founded in truth, viz.—that a woman can never help looking young unless she consents to dress like her great great grandmother. Paint wrinkles, affect corpulence, or assume the wasted look, the toothless mumble, the voice, the shuffle of age,—but, in the name of good taste and probability, dismiss your obsolete frippery to the tomb of all the Capulets.

THE DRAMA.

—Whilst the Drama bows to Virtue's cause,
To aid her precepts and enforce her laws,
So long the just and generous will befriend,
And triumph on her efforts will attend.

BROOKS.

THEATRICAL REMINISCENCES.

London, May 1823.

Kemble, the great John Kemble, is gone—gone for ever! Miss O'Neill is passed from the bright stage to the serene and happier shades of domestic life! Mrs. Siddons has laid aside her high golden crown, and stepped from the throne of tragedy, never more to sway us again! for, alas! we critics were swayed by her! These great names are now only names! We not only never see them on the stage, upholding grandeur and sorrow, with surpassing majesty, but we miss them every where! The three "great ones of the city" seem lost utterly! A few of our old favourites sometimes cross our path:—Bannister, with his dark eyes and manly face, drags feebly by us occasionally, pulling a pestilent gout painfully over the pavement; and now and then we glimpse Miss Farren—for her ladyship still has that title in her own right! But where is Munden? We almost ask after him with the same hesitating terror that attends Macduff's inquiries about his children. Where is he? He is not at Drury-lane we too well know; for Sir Peter Teazle, Dozey, Cockleton, Old Dornton, Marall, all languish for his presence! He is not about; for we do not meet his compact little person, married to an umbrella, as we were oft so wont to meet it! If we could hear that he was well, we would "seek to know no more!" Certain it is, that great have been the tragic losses to the stage within a very few years. In the departure—the final departure of Mrs. Siddons, tragedy lost its finest representative—a representative which we are warranted in saying will never again be met with.—Her personal qualifications for the highest tragic characters, were of the very finest nature. The dark, full, lighted eye—not quick, dancing, merrily-lustrous—but deep, silent, dreaming—intense—looking awful things—rolling in the portentous light of fate! Her fair capacious forehead—her statue-like features—her majestic person: graceful, and yet not so graceful as grand! In the haughty pride of such parts as Queen Katharine and Volumnia, her attitude seemed more like the carved beauty of marble—more the majesty of Grecian sculpture, than that of the living, breathing form of woman. She was destined, to personate tragedy—to embody the high creations of the loftiest tragic genius, and to realize and even heighten the wild imaginations of poesy! When Mrs. Siddons left the stage, death fell amongst a cluster of lofty characters; as though some fatality, some plague were raging in the drama's world. Lady Macbeth perished from her whispered murders and perilous dreams—the Lady Constance was released from earthly trouble—Belvidera was no longer to betray her husband into safety, and lay bare the wheel on which Pierre was to be racked—Volumnia died away from all her Roman greatness: all these, and many more perished with Mrs. Siddons; and have now

been too long gone to allow us a hope of recovering them.

Miss O'Neill was a different creature entirely from Mrs. Siddons; but though she could not ascend into "the loftiest heaven of invention," no other person could so well as Miss O'Neill represent the tender, trusting, sorrowing woman; reposing on the gentleness of her own heart, and softening all other hearts with the sensibilities of her own. As Mrs. Siddons was all energy, fire, high passion, poetry; so Miss O'Neill was all sweetness, simplicity, melting pathos. In such characters as Mrs. Haller, Isabella, Juliet, Desdemona—wherein love reigns in joy or in sorrow, she could not be surpassed; though, indeed, in Isabella we missed the terror, the truth, and the passion which Mrs. Siddons hurled into the part. When Miss O'Neill left the stage, she left no one to succeed her: but she did not leave us without a hope, or an expectation, of yet seeing some one who would take her place. Her marriage seemed the natural consequence of her style of acting; and we could not be surprised that so much softness, tenderness, and beauty, should carry her to a wedded life. Mrs. Siddons's succession left a void which never can be filled—for it is the trick of true genius to make creations which can never be copied to the life. Perhaps in the death of John Kemble, which has taken place so recently that his knell yet seems ringing in the hearts of those who prized him, the stage lost not only one of its finest actors, but one of its most useful supporters. He was equally great, both before the scenes, and behind them. To him it is chiefly owing, that we see the classical plays of Shakespere, so nobly arrayed in the correct costume of the age which they were written to perpetuate. Kemble not only played Coriolanus to perfection; he caused all around him to look and act their parts, so as to make the whole, one well harmonized picture.—When again shall we see such a performer? When again shall we such chastened vigour—such commanding dignity—such stern affecting power! In Hamlet he seemed divided between sorrow and philosophy: in Brutus he stood like a living struggling country, over which ruin seemed impending: in Macbeth, for stubborn ambition and wearing remorse, he had no equal. His Hotspur was a noble piece of gallant impetuosity, and his Pierre a fine, rough sketch of the soldier and the revolutionist, which no one who had seen it, could ever forget. Mr. Kemble was, however, most at home in parts of severe, patient grief, or thought—and in the slow delineation of hopeless love, he almost broke the hearts of those around him. What could surpass his severe looks and broken tones in Penruddock? In every glance—in every sound—you were reminded of happiness betrayed—love poisoned—and hope destroyed! His lofty bearing was finely contrasted with his common apparel; and his presence "seemed to dare you to forget." Mr. Kemble's representation of the Stranger (a character from which we rather think Penruddock was taken) was equally remarkable for its severity and pathos. Men shed tears before his broken heart! Other actors, of superiority in certain qualities, and in certain characters, have arisen, and may still arise, to tread the stage which he so proudly trod: but we despair of ever seeing his equal, as a tragedian and a manager—as the representative of Roman pride and power, and the delineator of baffled passion and stern-subduing grief. He was at once a man of high intellect—a scholar—and a gentleman; and, being such, the lovers of the stage cannot easily lose him from their memory.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATION.

THEATRICAL.

ON Saturday the 22d, the melo-drama of Rob Roy was brought forward. To those who have read the novel, it is unnecessary to say, that it gained nothing by being dramatised. There was much to please the eye in the scenery, and in the exhibitions of Scotch costume and manners; and much to delight the ear in the sweet and simple strains of Scottish musick, which came home to the heart. It is to these circumstances, that we chiefly ascribe the thunders of applause frequently reiterated. Something, however, is to be allowed for the delight with which Mrs. Entwisle is now invariably received. The humour of Jefferson and Blisset, very often set the audience in a roar, and in these times of distress we are all disposed to welcome "mirth and jollity," as affording a relief which the mind requires. Mrs. Burke was not the least in the attractions of this piece; but it does not seem to us that Scotch musick is so well adapted to the display of her powers of voice, as the more modern, but I will not say, more touching musick.

Mr. Wallack fell short of his performance in the Exile. He does not look the part of Rob Roy, and he has a kind of *swinging strut*, which seems to us exceedingly unnatural. He has not the broad manly shoulders, and brawny limbs of the Highlander; Mr. Hughes would look this character much better. The part of Frank, by Mr. Darley, was a very insipid piece of acting. After all, the want of unity of

interest in the play itself, or rather multiplication and distraction of interest, must always be a great objection.

The farce of the Village Lawyer, an old but genuine piece of humour, closed the entertainment of the evening. It is the character of Sheepface which has induced some of the best judges to pronounce Blisset the first comick actor in America. But, great as his merit is, we cannot consent to place him above Jefferson. These two admirable masters of nature, have each their peculiar excellencies. We may say of them, as of Virgil's umpire, between his poetick swains; *et tu vitula dignus et hic*.

On Monday, Rob Roy was repeated, and with considerable improvement in the representation. Blue Beard was given as the after piece. We remark with pleasure the rapid improvement of Mrs. Burke as an actress, in gay and lively characters. Her performance on this occasion gave unusual satisfaction. Mr. Hughes in Blue Beard, did ample justice to his part.

Wednesday, May 27. The Barmecide, a new dramatick piece was exhibited this evening for the benefit of that highly meritorious performer Mr. Warren, with the interesting drama of Ella Rosenberg. We were gratified to see the house so well attended, and by an audience as respectable as it was numerous. Mr. Warren deserves great credit for the selection of these pieces for his benefit; we have rarely witnessed a greater interest produced by theatrical representa-

tion. The story of the Barmecide powerfully captivates the feelings, and to those who are not previously made acquainted with the sequel, the interest heightens in every scene. The performance did justice to the excellence of the play. Mr. Hughes supported with dignity the character of Al Raschid the Caliph, who is represented as in history, a prince possessed of many noble qualities of mind, but in this instance as listening to the suggestions of an unworthy and ill-founded apprehension. The character of the Barmecide was supported by Mr. Wallack in a most superiour manner. Mrs. Darley as Zaida, displayed unusual taste and feeling; the scene in which she is gratified by her husband the Vizier with a secret interview with her son, is truly affecting—their surprise by the Caliph, and the dreadful sentence passed on the father and the fatal offspring, produced a most powerful effect. Never was there a more admirable representation, than that of the African by Mr. Burke; judging by the grins of

the tenants of the clouds, there seemed to reign inexpressible delight in that lofty region, at beholding themselves thus faithfully represented. We cannot pass over this notice, without expressing our satisfaction, at the taste, and elegance displayed in the designs and the execution of the scenery.

Ella Rosenberg is a dramatick production of great excellence. The performance of Mr. Wallack, Mr. Hughes, and Mrs. Entwisle drew forth much applause. The scene between Ella, and her long lost husband, was a masterpiece of performance. We have seldom witnessed so sudden and so powerful an effect produced on any audience; at the same instant, many a white handkerchief was raised to receive the tear called forth from its crystal fount of human pity, by the wand of nature. Although for many years an attendant on the theatre, we must candidly declare we have never left it with better feelings, or more completely gratified by the pleasures of the scenick art.

THESPIS.

THEATRICAL REGISTER.

FOR 1809-10.

[continued from page 212 of vol. 1st.]

Wednesday, Dec. 13th. **FOUNDLING OF THE FOREST**—and **NO SONG, NO SUPPER, Hoare.** It will be deemed, perhaps, superfluous to add any thing to what has been already said on the performance of the, *Foundling of the Forest*—yet the principal characters of this drama are so admirably supported that every repetition of it discovers some new excellence, that inhibits silence. The striking situations into which the heroine is continually thrown, are such as to awaken the most agonizing recollections, and to call for an expression of the most turbulent emotions. To exhibit these without falling short and sinking into tameness and vapid declamation, or, without “overstepping the modesty of nature,” and offending by extravagance and rant, requires not only the strongest powers and most genuine feeling, but likewise sound judgment and nice discrimination. To say then that *mrs. Mason* gave entire satisfaction in this character is to pass a high encomium on her professional talents; and this we do without qualification. There is, in her delineations of the passions, a strength, and fulness, which relieve the imagination from the task usually imposed upon it by our cold phlegmatic actors, of supplying *their* want of feeling and energy, in the af

fecting scenes of the drama—at times we are hurried away by the fervor and exuberance of her manner, while, again, there is an unexpected touch of pathos in her voice and action that seizes the heart by surprise and completely overpowers it. As an example we would barely refer to her expression of the last words of the character, when, sinking into the arms of de Valmont, she says “ah! chide not love; joy kills as well as grief!” we recollect no passage in the whole play that went more touchingly to the heart. *Mrs. Poe* was very clever in *Rosabelle*—there is a pertness and volubility in her manner and delivery that is very appropriate—*L' Eclair* was no less successful, and went through his *manual* with a precision and dexterity that proves him to be a severe disciplinarian. *Mr. Collins's Gaspard* wanted uniformity. The *old* man, was, at some times, entirely forsaken, particularly in the scene with *Rosabelle*, when she invites him to dance—the capers he cut bore too strong a resemblance to *three and twenty*—the stiff and feeble figuring of *sixty five* were not to be seen.

No Song No Supper proved nor song nor supper to us—there was a time when we enjoyed both, and we do not despair of seeing it again; but better cooks must be procured or it will never relish.

Friday. 15th. VENONI—and TALE OF MYSTERY. The lovers of mirth, fun, and jollity were highly regaled this evening by the most happy selection of laugh-provoking pieces that we have seen since the congenial conjunction of “To marry

or not to marry" and "Princess and no Princess." The managers have certainly a most exalted opinion of the sensibility of their audience and are determined to gratify it to the fullest extent. They are not satisfied with rousing it by a slap on the shoulders with a serious comedy of three long acts, but they must afterwards tweak it by the nose with an afterpiece of equal length and seriousness. The strong resemblance of these pieces to each other should have been a guarantee against their union. They both display the deformities of human nature—both exhibit virtue and innocence oppressed, both excite for their respective victims an animated interest. Indeed, a very little stretching of the imagination would convert the *Tale of Mystery*, into a continuation of *Venoni*, and he must be clever indeed who on the succeeding day can determine, whether he was *most delighted* with the hypocritical villany of *Celestino* or the revengeful malignancy of *Romaldi*.

Monday, 18th. BELLES' STRATAGEM, *Mrs. Cowley*—and JOHN BULL AT FONTAINELEAU. The Belles' Stratagem is a delightful comedy, and excepting a few vulgarisms, which it is almost impossible to exclude if real life be the object portrayed, claims rank with the best productions of the modern muse. The evils growing out of fashionable life are held up to odium and avoidance, while the refinement which springs from its intercourse, which sweetens and beautifies society, is depicted in colors so alluring and attractive, that it is impossible to see it, without wishing to partake. It is much to be regretted, that this spe

cies of comedy is so seldom to be seen on our stage ; for, independent of the general benefit which might be expected from its representation, it would prove a school for the actor, in which he might learn something of that ease of gesture, gracefulness of carriage, and polished conversation, which mark the difference between that society which he is generally accustomed to, and that which it is his endeavor to exhibit for imitation. It may with great justice be said, that this is a species of knowledge which every man should acquire, before he engages in the active duties of the profession ; but when we see men daily enlisting in the service, apparently without having considered it even an useful accomplishment, they should, if it were possible, be inveigled into the habit, by continued and frequent practice. There is an opinion, as prevalent as it is untrue, that it is the part which makes the actor, and every young performer who, from want of power to fill the higher, is confined to the lower walks of the drama, attributes his want of supereminence to this imagined unjust restraint. For the correction of this error there is no better remedy than the performance of genteel comedy ; for when the actor is made sensible how great is the difficulty of portraying manners of which he has numerous and daily examples to imitate, he cannot deny the much greater difficulty, in exhibiting Hamlet, Macbeth, Richard and Rolla, of which he has but few models, and those perhaps not perfect. We shall require no better illustration of our position than the performance of this evening :

and if any one will say (with very few exceptions) that they ever saw a more unfinished set of gentlemen, we shall be ready to acknowledge our error, and admit that they have been in much worse company than we even suspected them of. With the *Letitia Hardy* of *mrs. Mason*, the *mrs. Racket* of *mrs. Oldmixon*, and the *lady Touchwood* of *mrs. Young*, we were very much pleased. The first is perhaps as finished a piece of acting as the New-York boards have ever exhibited in that line. *Twaits* would have been a very good *Flutter*, had he confined himself to his author, and let *mrs. Clark* alone. His scarlet coat and black under-clothes may be very stylish. We presume they are, for they look'd like *old-stagers*, and evinced being frequently called upon. Indeed, when he said "my tailors bill has not been paid these two years," we were perfectly satisfied that his tailor had been even with him, and within that time had not trusted him with a new suit. *Captain Doyle* wanted only the red coat, to be a match for *Flutter*; fashioned as he has been however in the New-York school, we can readily excuse his preference of *sable entire*—he looked mournfully elegant, and, if he had shown a white handkerchief dangling from his pocket, would have been killingly genteel. *Mrs. Young* was not guided by her author when dressing for the earlier scenes of the play. A court dress for the morning is absurd. Her costume should have been adapted to walking; for *mrs. Racket* is made to say to her "you will have time enough to dress for dinner when we return." *Mr. Simpson's Doricourt* did

not equal our expectations—he wanted that *je ne sçai quoi* which the author describes, and which should raise him preeminently superior to all his companions. *He, mr. Young and mr. Foster,* were the only well dressed men of the party, and looked the characters they personated.

Wednesday, 20. MOUNTAINEERS—and LOVE LAUGHS AT LOCKSMITHS, Colman. Mr. Morrel made a second attempt this evening as *Octavian*—we saw nothing in his performance, to induce us to depart from our first opinion ; he is not competent to fill the highest walks of the drama. If he is determined however to make the stage a profession, let him direct his attention to parts within the compass of his ability, and by practice and application he *may* become a respectable performer. Were his knowledge of the business of the stage equal to that of those who now tread its boards, he would not shrink in comparison with the most of them. We were sorry to see that indulgence withheld from him, that is always due to a trial performance. An established actor, who voluntarily undertakes, or suffers himself to be unnecessarily placed in parts without the scope of his talents, might merit an early expression of disapprobation ; but the youthful candidate should be encouraged while the chance remains to him of exhibiting his powers. The veteran, if combating with public dislike, will feel his powers slacken and his genius sink :—how much more embarrassed, then, must be the novice, who has not the aid of experience and maturity of judgment, to bear him up against the chilling blasts of

unceasing opposition. The piece was throughout badly performed, and merited the disapprobation universally expressed.

Love laughs at Locksmiths was the afterpiece ; and by a rich support in all its parts made some amends for the defects which preceded it. The speech-making little gentleman who so much amused us on a former occasion played the second to the same tune this evening. He did not, to be sure, apologize *for singing*, nor did he call for the *ayes*, without the *nose* ; but he told us a pathetic tale of his bodily infirmities, and, while he begged to be excused from repeating the song, of which he was altogether incapable, from indisposition, invited attention to an occasional address, prepared expressly for the purpose of repelling an *illiberal insinuation*, which had been made in some of the public prints, viz : that speech-making was congenial to his temper and disposition. He begged the audience to believe that nothing was so foreign to his inclination, and called, as proof, the present instance, when, laboring under severe indisposition, he had travelled out of his path to address them on a subject interesting to himself alone, and which had nothing to do with the business before them. The gallery clapped, as usual ; and the little man, swelling with self-delight, marched off, in a style unparalleled by any thing, but the tragedy strut of the two *Kings of Brentford*, or a vain-glorious crow getting across a gutter.

Friday, 22d. FOUNDLING OF THE FOREST— and THREE WEEKS AFTER MARRIAGE, *Murphy*. Our pleasure this evening was marred by

the indisposition of *mr. Doyle*. *Mr. Twaits*, who is a very Hercules, and whose *desire to be useful* often outstrips his prudence, undertook to support the part of *Longueville* as well as that of *L'Eclair*. We would have excused this, had there been no person out of the cast capable of undertaking it; but while *mr. Tyler* was unemployed, it certainly was not necessity, and we should have preferred to hear him read the part, to witnessing the heart-rending transitions from Alexander the great, to Alexander the coppersmith. There was one thing however which afforded us great satisfaction, and, as it bespeaks the profound knowledge of our modern Proteus in the arts of the stage, we cannot pass it by unnoticed. It was this; whenever he played the part of *mr. Doyle*, he cunningly slipped on the surcoat of that gigantic actor, in which he hectored about like another little David in the coat of mail of Goliath: and so complete was the deception produced by this artifice, that we should have taken him for the captain himself, had he instead of speaking through his nose, spoke from the bottom of his belly.

The exquisite performance of *mr. Simpson* and *mrs. Mason* as *sir Charles* and *lady Racket*, *mr. Twaits's Drugget*, and *mrs. Oldmixon's Dimity* has rendered *Three Weeks after Marriage* the most diverting afterpiece of the season. It was played with infinite spirit, and drew forth continued applause.

Tuesday 26th. GEORGE BARNWELL, *Lillo*—and TALE OF MYSTERY. It is not often that the principal characters in this moral and interest-

ing tragedy are so well supported as they were this evening. *Mr. Simpson* represented *Barnwell*, and not only looked the character well, but portrayed it in colors of great richness and perfect nature. His simple and unaffected manner is well adapted to the personation of the character; and it this simplicity and unaffectedness of manner that constitute one of his chief excellencies. We have been so long accustomed to hear every thing delivered in a formal studied way, that when we see *Mr. Simpson* playing from nature, discarding all the art and trickery of the stage, and speaking not according to the best laid down rules, but with a feeling inspired by the sentiments he utters, he awakens a sensation of pleasure that we can hardly describe. *Mrs. Mason* was the fascinating syren that lured the artless youth to his downfall:—her *Millwood* was a very able and impressive performance. *Mrs. Poe* played *Lucy*, and gave to the character an importance which it seldom receives. *Mrs. Young* was beautifully interesting as *Maria*, and had she strength equal to her sensibility, need not fear a comparison with any other representative. *Mr. Tyler* was at home in *Thorowgood*. It is that line for which he is peculiarly destined, and in which there is no actor on the american stage who is his superior.

The Tale of Mystery followed, and produced all the enlivening effects for which it is so much admired and which are its prominent characteristics.

Wednesday, 27th. ROAD TO RUIN—and MY

GRANDMOTHER. The continued indisposition of *mr. Doyle* compelled the substituting of the *Road to Ruin* for the *Foundling of the Forest*, which had been announced as the entertainment for the evening. The house was excessively thin, but the play was nevertheless supported with considerable spirit.

The farce of *My Grandmother* exhibited some very good acting. *Twaits's Dicky Gossip* was in the first line of excellence. *Collins* is a very excellent frenchman, and gave *Souffrance* with much character and effect. *Mrs. Oldmixon* sung *Florella* charmingly ; but her vivacity wants restraint:—a too free indulgence oftentimes makes her appear fantastical.

Thursday 28th. VENONI—and DON JUAN.

Friday, 29th. FOUNDLING OF THE FOREST—and CHILDREN IN THE WOOD. This favorite play was announced for the last time, and drew a much better house than the two preceding. It was received as usual with great pleasure, and *mr. Doyle* being restored to his place, it suffered nothing in the representation.

Monday, January 1st, 1810. THE AFRICANS ; OR, WAR, LOVE AND DUTY. (first time) *Colman*—and HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS. This very celebrated piece of the younger *Colman* was made the manager's *new year's gift* to the public. The following performers were arranged as the

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

<i>Foulahs.</i>		Second warrior, Mr. Foster	
Farulho, (<i>the priest</i>)	Mr. Tyler	<i>European.</i>	
Torribal, . . .	Young	Henry Augustus	} Twaits
Madiboo, . . .	Simpson	Mug,	
Selico, . . .	Robertson	Fetterwell, .	Hallam
<i>Mandingoes.</i>		Marrowbone, .	Lindsley
Demba Sego Jalla, (<i>king of Kasson</i>)	} Doyle	Capt. Adamant,	M'Enery
Daucari, . . .		<i>African Women.</i>	
Chief and warrior,	Anderson	Darina, . . .	Mrs. Twaits
		Berissa, . . .	Young
		Sutta, . . .	Oldmixon

The Africans was brought out at the *Haymarket* theatre in London, the 29th July, 1808. The fable is taken from a collection of french novels intituled "*Les Nouvelles de Florian*," and exhibits a pleasing combination of the most interesting emotions of the mind. *Darina*, a widow of the Foulah tribe, is left with three sons, *Selico*, *Madiboo*, and *Torribal*. *Selico* is betrothed to *Berissa*, the daughter of *Farulho*, the priest; and when on the eve of marriage the ceremony is interrupted by an irruption of the *Mandingoes* into the town of *Fatteconda*, then commences the first conflict between "*war, love and duty*." *Selico*, torn by contending passions, at length flies to the succour of his mother, whom he finds with his two brothers, who had taken refuge from the barbarity and massacre of the *Mandingoes*, in the neighboring woods. Here they are reduced to encounter the dreadful calamity of famine : to alleviate which *Selico* obtains a reluctant consent from his brother, *Madiboo* to take him up for sale to the slave-market, temporarily instituted by the king of the *Mandingoes*, and to apply the produce to the relief of their mother's distress. The slave-merchants objecting to the weakness of *Selico*,

he proposes to *Madiboo*, (his brother) as a last resource, that he shall deliver him up to the Mandingo monarch, as a slave who had escaped from his tent, and for whose apprehension a reward is offered of 400 ounces of gold. An interesting struggle ensues between the brothers; *Madiboo* is at length prevailed upon, and the wretched *Selico*, wearied with life, as he thinks his mistress *Berissa* has perished with her father, in the general massacre, is delivered up to the sanguinary monarch of Mandingo, who instantly orders him to the stake. A funeral pile is also prepared for a female slave, who has resisted the amorous advances of the tyrant. The wretched criminals are brought out, and at the dreadful moment, when the fatal torch is about to be applied, they mutually recognize each other as *Selico* and *Berissa*. An affecting appeal is made to the humanity of the Mandingo; but he continues unrelenting, until the appearance of the venerable priest, and the agonised mother, whose united solicitations so work upon his savage nature, that he at last grants a general amnesty, and consents to the union of *Selico* and *Berissa*. The distress of the piece is relieved by the whimsical adventures of *Mr. Henry Augustus Mug*, an ivory-turner of London, who is first shipwrecked on the coast of Africa, is then made a slave to the *Foulah* tribe, and afterwards arrives at the extraordinary and high sounding situation of secretary of the foreign department, to the black king of the Mandingoes; he has also an affair of the heart with *Sutta*, a simple yet benevolent african; and they conclude

their amour by forming an additional couple in the matrimonial dance.

This drama possesses, in a very considerable degree, those characteristic attributes, which peculiarly distinguish the muse of *mr. Colman*: it blends the pathetic with the gay, and, by the force of contrast, exhibits, in strong and appropriate colors, the energetic burst of feeling, the impressive flow of sentiment, and the jocund effusions of hilarity. A vein of humor, happily adapted to the different situations of the respective characters, enlivens those parts of the performance which, with less skilful management, might produce a drawling and disagreeable *tædium*. The *sentiments* are dictated by the purest morality, and not unfrequently conveyed in terms well calculated to captivate the judgment and affect the heart. Perhaps in a few of the lighter scenes, a fastidious mind might object to expressions which seem too nearly to approximate to the language of low life; but those like blots upon white paper are easily erased. The Pegasus of MR. COLMAN is not a dull, lifeless, plodding animal: he is a steed of spirit, full of fire and genius; and, as he gallops with vigor and velocity, it cannot be unpardonable to kick up a little *dust* in his progress. In the AFRICANS we do not discover much of originality of character; yet the peculiarities of each are nicely discriminated, and the person once introduced upon the stage acts in a natural and probable manner until the completion of the design. MR. COLMAN has, with great success, steered his dramatic bark between the sombre heaviness of the

german school, and the farcical frivolities, which, too frequently, disgrace the modern drama. He has woven, from the light materials of a french novel, a *web*, in which the different hues of sensibility, terror, affection, and mirth, are skilfully touched, and happily varied. In the occasional situations of the characters, technically called stage-effect, *mr. Colman* has evinced great judgment and taste ; the agonizing conflict of fraternal love, the distress of the mother and the heart-rending recognition of *Selico* and *Berissa*, at the dreadful pyre, are specimens of dramatic ability, which must always excite the admiration of a sympathising audience ;—and though perhaps in regularity of plot, and the higher qualifications of the *vis comica*, the play of *THE AFRICANS* may not rank with some of the productions of the same ingenious author, it yet possesses merit so unquestionable as to place it in an honorable station in the list of modern dramas. The music is by *Kelly*, and displays a very pleasing union of taste and science. The scenery by *Holland* was picturesque and descriptive, and the town in flames managed with fine effect. On the dresses we cannot bestow much praise ; the costume was deficient in uniformity, and in some instances quite inapposite. The mandingo king looked as if he had borrowed his dress from the grand turk, and *Farulho* might have very well passed for the high priest of the greek church. *Mr. Mug* wanted only an apron, to be a good representative of a cook's scullion, and the finery of *Darina's* family but little comported with that state of poverty, which required the manual la-

bor of three sturdy boys to keep one old woman from starving. On the performance this evening we forbear to make any comments : the house was a bumper, and netted upwards of seventeen hundred dollars, the greatest sum ever received since its erection. The audience, as was to be expected, was riotous and noisy, but, excepting the throwing a fork at mrs. Oldmixon, when singing the bravura song, was not guilty of any very striking indecorum. We thought it very injudicious to expose her to insult, on an occasion such as this ; for it is well known that our taste is not yet sufficiently refined, to enjoy this style of singing ; and a New-York audience, in their *soberest* moments, will only listen to it from respect for the performer.

Wednesday, 3d. THE AFRICANS—and JOHN BULL AT FONTAINBLEAU. The house this evening was very well attended to witness the second representation of *The Africans*. The disappointment we experienced on the first evening, and which we readily ascribed to an imperfection of vision, incident to the day, was but little removed. We were not sensible before of the heaviness of many scenes, which are unnecessarily prolonged to an unreasonable length and are supported by a dialogue feeble in interest and destitute of spirit ; these would not be injured by curtailment, and the piece consequently improved by the alteration. *Mr. Robertson* played *Selico*, and as in every thing in the serious line which he undertakes was *Mr. Robertson* throughout. This gentleman is in that stage of improvement when a few hints,

if attended to, may be of service to him. By dint of long practice and close attention to his profession, he has conquered his natural deficiencies and attained a knowledge of stage business and stage effect, so, as to fill a very respectable line of characters, in a very respectable manner. He has evidently taken Mr. Cooper for his model, and almost all that he exhibits of excellence is the result of a close imitation of that distinguished actor. The voice, the attitude, the gesture, the enunciation, &c. are all copies, more or less successful ;—now, though we would be much better pleased to see Mr. Robertson acting in a style of originality, yet as he has, perhaps judiciously, chosen to rely more upon his talents of mimicry than invention, we are anxious that he should at least confine himself to the excellencies of his model, and not, in his indiscriminate eagerness to imitate, fall into an adoption of his faults. We would caution him to avoid that tedious and painful precision which of late years has characterized the enunciation of Mr. Cooper, and which in Mr. Robertson is the more impolitic as it is not accompanied by that correct pronunciation for which Mr. C. is noted. We would caution him against that dull, monotonous phlegmatic manner of delivering the most commonplace conversation of his characters—that turgid bellowing with which a glow of passion is heavily lumbered forth—that see-sawing of the hands—that formal and studied gesture which requires all the finish and grace of Mr. C. to make it endurable—that stage trickery which, instead of suiting the action to the word and making the ges-

ture spring from the quick impulse of the feeling, induces the actor to be continually throwing himself into some statue-like attitude, so that a sudden glow of emotion, or burst of passion is kept suspended until the actor has fixed himself into some pretty posture in which to bring it forth. Thus the flashes of the author, the quick and ever-varying feelings to which the scene should give rise, are incessantly *hanging-fire*, and the spectator is constantly reminded that the scene before him is altogether a deception and the actor a mere puppet playing a part. We are sick of these phlegmatic, half-finished copies of mr. Cooper—these tedious, tardy enunciations—these laborings after grace—these rowings of the arms—twistings of the head—sawings of the air—these pauses without signification, and all the other fantastic grimaces, by which a set of unmeaning creatures weary us to death, and really seem to imagine that they are successful imitators of mr. Cooper, because they have not suffered one of his faults to escape them. We do not mean to apply these last remarks in their full extent to *mr. Robertson*. He is certainly entitled to much credit for the respectable standing to which his sedulity has raised him: but they may be taken home by most of our dramatic corps, who are too generally the humble *ditto's* of mr. Cooper, having each one seized some fault or other of his, wherewith to cover, as with a filthy rag, their own nakedness; so that, even our old acquaintance *John*, who seems to “flourish in immortal youth” can hardly carry off a chair or snuff a candle, without a grace or an attitude. Our recollection

at this moment furnishes us with but one passage and that very imperfectly, to instance as an illustration of *mr. Robertson's* faults. This was an apostrophe, or invocation, or ejaculation, we really forget which, uttered just before he is brought to the stake, to his mother, and brother, and threatened love, and some half a score other blessed saints, both living and dead.—At this passage *mr. Robertson* seems to have said to himself, in the words of *Nick Bottom*, “here will be salt tears shed, or I’m mistaken’; and at it he goes, in a manner that made our hearts ache;—not for poor *Selico* and his starved mother and half burnt wife, but for the unhappy english language, thus barbarously tortured. There were such m-m-mothers, and bl-l-l-esseds, and mur-r-r-der-r-r-ed l-l-loves, that we dreaded, what between the mumbling and rumbling, scarcely a word would get away in its natural form. It seems as if these mannerists never knew when to let an m escape from their lips, and as to an unlucky r, they never happen upon one, but they are sure to r-r-ride it to death. The preceding was accompanied with indescribable writhings and stretches, in which *mr. Robertson*, through an over zeal to be graceful and affecting, continually indulges. One would almost suppose that he had been delighted with the uncouth picture of *mr. Kemble* as *Rolla*, and was on all occasions attempting a similar attitude. Indeed, we are sorry to see him so partial to these straddle-bag attitudes, wherein the body is shown at full length, from the point of one finger, to the extremity of the opposite toe. And since such is his

ambition, it is a pity it should not be gratified, and we here put his heart at rest by assuring him that both in enunciation, and gesture, and attitude, he is, to use a yankee phrase, “a very *lengthy* actor —by *lengthy* meaning *tedious*.” This remark may appear rather abrupt, nor should we have made it, did we not think it in the power of Mr. Robertson to obviate its future application, by infusing more spirit into his performance and discarding that drawling enunciation, that turgid ranting, and that formal, and oft times unmeaning, gesticulation.

Mr. Simpson's Madiboo was given with great feeling and spirit, though occasionally with too much hurry, and at the close with a bustling vivacity, rather bordering upon antic. The transports of the simple child of nature are certainly to be given with fervor and wild enthusiasm, but throughout the character there is a manliness of feeling incompatible with puerile turbulence. We would invite the attention of *Mr. Simpson* for one moment to a fault which is the natural companion of that liveliness, spirit and feeling, that we so much admire in him, and this is, an occasional hurry in his manner, which prevents him from giving finish and effect to many passages, and often robs them of the impressiveness they would otherwise possess. He too often overshoots the point where effect is to be produced, and in a manner, to speak technically, gives the clap-trap the go-by. He apparently acts entirely from feeling, and though this gives his performances an uncommon appearance of nature, yet it would not be impolitic in him, to

rein in his youthful ardor, to curb that hey-day of the spirits that “runs frolic through the veins” and pay some attention to stage effect, and the justifiable arts of “an able actor.”

Mr. Simpson is one, for whom age and experience will do much. He has admirable materials for his profession; and when sober time has taken off the *fiery edge* of his youth, and tamed down that wild exuberance, which sometimes runs away with the young performer, we shall be much disappointed if he is not distinguished for a style of acting, rich, chaste and mellow. *Mr. Young* was a very tolerable *Torribal*:—his performance was marked by all the roughness with which the author has dressed the character. The *Mug* of *mr. Traits* was of very common manufacture;—if it claims to be *delft*, it was but half finished, and lacked even the glossy coat to make it pass current—There was more of character in *mrs. Oldmixon's Sutta*, than almost any other part in the piece. *Mrs. Traits* made nothing of *Darina*. *Mrs. Young* looked the beautiful *Berissa*. *Doyle* was furiously majestic as *Mandingoes' king*; and *mr. Tyler* supported the part of the priest with reverend gravity and pious resignation.

Friday, 5th. AFRICANS—and THREE WEEKS AFTER MARRIAGE.

Monday, 8th. DO.—and MY GRANDMOTHER.

Wednesday, 10th. DO.—NO SONG NO SUPPER.—The indisposition of *mr. Simpson*, occasioned an alteration in the parts, that very much injured the representation of the evening. *Mr. Doyle* was substituted to read the part of *Madi-*

boo, and executed his task to the best of his ability. *Mr. Anderson* assumed the robes of Mandingoes' king, but there was *too little* of majesty about him, to make his personation supportable. *Where is he?* a revived farce, was postponed from the same cause, and *No song No supper* introduced in its stead.

Friday, 12th. WILD OATS, *O'Keefe*—and CHILDREN IN THE WOOD. The comedy of *Wild Oats* has generally been ranked as the best of *O'Keefe's* productions. When first introduced on the New-York stage it was a great favorite. The performance of the evening however promises little from the revival. *Mr. Simpson*, though but half recovered from his indisposition, came forward as *Rover*, but was very deficient in that eccentricity which marks the character, and which was so happily hit off in our ever to be lamented *Hodgkinson*. *Twait's*, who was also apparently suffering from sickness, was very defective in *sir George Thunder*—his person is peculiarly adapted to the part, and had he infused into the personation more dignity of manner and characteristic petulance, it would have been of infinite service.

Mr. Doyle seemed to have been allotted by the destinies for an original *John Dory*, and we believe he would have met the design, had he been master of the words of his part:—but a shameful deficiency in this regard deranged the whole business, and instead of playing *John Dory*, he “played the very devil.” *Mr. Lindsley* too, though a mere nothing in general, made himself

of importance as a *Gammon*, by destroying some of the best scenes through a total ignorance of every word it was his duty to have uttered: if he has saved his *bacon* with the managers, he has been more lucky than he deserved. Many others are equally obnoxious to the same charge, though in a lesser degree. The *Ephraim Smooth* of *mr. Collins* may fall under like censure, but with less injurious results. The *Ame- lia* of *mrs. Twaits* was like most of her performances, productive of little effect. *Lady Amaranth* by *mrs. Mason*, and *Jane* by *mrs. Oldmixon* were well supported characters. We were highly pleased with *mr. Robertson* in *Sim*. There was a chasteness and simplicity in his style of acting, an unobtrusive humor, and a natural display of frankness and feeling, that we have very rarely of late seen displayed in characters of the kind on our boards. We would recommend to *mr. Robertson* to pay attention to parts of this kind, where rusticity is to be depicted, blended with honest feeling, and where there is no occasion for broad farce or comic caricature. The simple country lad is one of the most pleasing characters in the minor department of comedy, and if *mr. Robertson* can succeed in perfecting himself in it, he will add very greatly to his already respectable standing in the drama. *Mr. Young* was very respectable in *Harry*; and *mr. Tyler*, as the reduced clergyman, venerable and impressive. A further apology was made for the postponement of *Where is He?* and the *Children in the Wood* accepted as a substitute.

Monday, 15th. BELLES' STRATAGEM—and

WHERE IS HE? The present state of the company is an insurmountable obstruction to a perfect representation of this comedy. The scene lying entirely in high life, and the various parts requiring the most finished manners and elegance of address for a faithful portraiture, requires a greater number of accomplished actors than are to be found in the list of our *dramatis personæ*. The *sables* on this occasion were more general than before; and we could not but again remark, and that with great pleasure, the spirited manner in which our friend captain *Doyle* and his worthy compeers dress the fine gentleman. When they wear a round hat it is fiercely stuck on one side the head, and a white pocket-handkerchief is a never to be omitted appendage dangling from the skirts of the coat. As an improvement to the last captivating fashion, we would recommend that hereafter they never strut on the stage without the end of the shirt tail sticking out the breeches pocket.

Where is He? we believe produced universal disappointment. We were kept constantly on the tenter-hooks of expectation for something very clever, and were as constantly balked in obtaining it. That its repose has been disturbed, we think is matter of regret, and we recommend to the managers to lay it quietly down again, and if any one should inquire *where is he?* 'say gone to his rest never again to be disturbed.'

Tuesday, 16th. AFRICANS—and SPOILED CHILD. The *Africans* and *Spoiled Child* were the closing performances of the first part of the

season. The house, it is understood, will remain shut till the middle of February, when several new pieces, which are now in preparation, will be brought out.

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For the Observer.

THEATRICAL.

THE TRAVELLERS.

This play, or speaking pantomime, was written by Mr. Cherry, a very excellent actor, but a very indifferent author—he also wrote the *Soldier's Daughter*, to suit the spirit of the times, and to gratify the prejudices of his nation as to political opinions. . . . Cumberland wrote a play called the *Sailor's Daughter* on the same principle. . . . The *Travellers* is destitute of all merit as to plot or moral, as it goes against all probability, that the heir to the throne of China should be found on board of a British man of war, and be married to an admiral's daughter. In London this might be swallowed by John Bull, but it is too improbable a fable to be believed by an American audience. This play almost wholly depends on scenery and music. . . . As to the acting part, we are inclined to believe, that the various characters were as well filled and acted as circumstances would permit—The scenery and dresses did honor to the taste and spirit of the manager, and we are sorry he had not fuller houses to defray his expences.—The views in China, and the Chinese costume, were rich and appropriate, and had all the effect that the Baltimore Theatre could afford. . . . The music is the production of Corri and Pellisier, and is deservedly admired; but the fine Overture, executed by the sweet violin of Gillingham, and accompanied by a very respectable band had not half so many charms on the audience, as would the fiddling of Yankee Doodle or Maggy Lauder—Some

of the best songs were omitted, but those that were sung by the ladies, were decently given—We missed the pleasing figure of Mrs. Woodham, but we had in her place, that veteran performer Mrs. Wilmot, a good actress, but sometimes, in our opinion, *too much animated or significant*—her tiny person forms a complete contrast with Mrs. Melmoth—the one is monstrously little, the other is monstrously large!

We think we never saw Mr. Webster to greater disadvantage than in this play, where he resumed all his unnatural shrugs and contortions, and produced a most disagreeable confusion of shakes, quivers and discords; it must have puzzled even the dexterous bow of Gillingham to accompany him.*—Mr. W. complains of the Baltimore audience, but he speaks without knowledge; if he were to appear on the London stage, he would meet with harsher treatment—on that stage there is no respect of persons, as Mr. Cooper can tell—here Mr. W. has been treated with lenity, and even partiality, by his countrymen, and, we fear, they have been nursing a spoil'd child. We would not have condescended to have taken so much notice of this single gentleman, but that we are inclined to believe that he has talents, that, with a little wisdom, he might make pleasing to the public and profitable to himself.

Inclined as we are to give all due praise to the scenery of the Travellers, we cannot help thinking that the last act is but a clumsy and ill-timed piece of business—the whole play is stuffed full of far-fetched compliments to the English nation, particularly the scene of the English man of war, which is a far-fetched contrivance to flatter the English navy. A man with fewer brains than even Mr. Warren, after the shameful attacks on the Chesapeake and Copenhagen, should have seen the manifest impropriety, at this alarming crisis, of bringing forward such an exhibition on the *American* stage.—It would not require the

Note*—His best song was what is called the "Trumper of Victory," and that was not very enchanting.—The truth is, that whatever was fascinating in this piece, in the Theatre of Baltimore, belonged to the musicians, not to the singers.

creative genius of a Shakspeare, or a Dryden, to have omitted the last act—or, to have made it the first ; and, if we may be permitted to use an *Irishism*, instead of landing the Prince of China on board an English man of war, to have put him on shore in his own country. . . . by such a transposition, the most brilliant scene in the piece would have concluded it, and, besides giving it an air bordering somewhat on probability, have left a more deep and lasting impression on the spectators.

PHILO CRITO.

ACTORS AND THEATRICALS.

IN England alone actors have occupied somewhat of that consideration in society to which they are entitled. Not that we are by any means a theatrical people, but the dictates of good sober sense have shewn us that there is no reason why the professor of a liberal and ingenious art should be undervalued upon the stale plea of custom. It is here a received rule, to a given extent, that "worth makes the man," or, to be more explicit, that the honourable character and conduct of an individual is more looked to than his profession, provided, indeed, he be not poor, for that is an "unconquerable bar" to social notice. There is feeling and good sense in this discrimination, as far as it goes; it is worthy the better portion of the better class of English society. I say "better portion," because Lord Chesterfield observes that "people of the first quality can be as silly, ill-bred, and worthless, as people of meaner degree;" and there are some of the higher orders of English society, high only in pride and fortune, that have about as correct a notion of the claims of intellect upon them, as an Esquimaux would have of the nature of Newton's Fluxions, were he questioned respecting them. But though actors are held in far more estimation here than in foreign countries, still many have a ridiculous prejudice against the profession, which they should overcome.

This sort of prejudice, though very unreasonable, is of old standing. The ancients, it is well known, held the profession of an actor in disesteem; but there are certain contradictions respecting them which it would be difficult to clear up. Lucian says that a great knowledge of music, poetry, rhetoric, and philosophy, were necessary, to succeed on the stage in his time. Now, this being the case, it is singular that the respect universally paid to persons versed in these arts should not have operated in favour of those so accomplished in them. We know very little of the ancient stage, but what we do know leads us to believe that tragedy was exhibited on it more in the way of declamation than as an imitation of nature. A large portion of the ancient stage entertainments consisted of mimicry and antics, the professors of which had, perhaps, no great claim to respect, and the comedy of the ancients was of a low kind. They used masques in their stage performances, which must have effectually concealed the different changes of countenance produced by every attempt at expression; and this gives us additional reason to believe that certain regulated gestures and a well-toned voice, with a recitation, rather than acting as we now understand it, were all the ancients valued in a performer. The accounts which have come down to us, however, tend to shew that some actors of good morals and attainments were held in esteem by the highest ranks in Rome, as in the example of Roscius, of whom Cicero speaks so highly. It is therefore probable, that the majority of performers were low, dissolute mimics, and that the censure cast upon the whole corps had its exceptions among the higher classes of tragedians. Modern acting differs from the ancient, in its requiring greater originality, and a certain natural genius, to succeed. The power of representation of the different emotions of the mind, for which we value an actor, was no part of the qualification they deemed necessary for the stage. Their tragedy, with the chorus, could we hear it per-

formed now, would not, it is likely, though we were perfect masters of the language, arouse our feelings more than the simple reading. It was strictly national, and the taste for it must have been acquired by education. It appears to me that our stage performances are of a much higher order, and the performers also, because they are more universally interesting, and the scene is kept nearer to nature. Poetry should speak a universal language, and the stage should speak it too. Let us suppose the insanity of Orestes exhibited by a performer in a mask, who recites the character with a well-regulated tone and emphasis: it is obvious that he would add but little comparative effect to the poetry of the author. Suppose the same piece performed by Garrick or Kean, their acting would be felt and understood, wherever the language was comprehended, because nature shews the same emotions every where under similar causes of excitement. There is a poetical feeling necessary for a modern actor. He must be imaginative, and have an acquaintance with the deep secrets of the mind, which cannot be taught him by art. The actor of the ancients was, perhaps, more the being of study and artifice. Such we may conjecture, for we can conjecture only, is the difference between the two; and if so, the advantage is certainly on the side of the moderns.

In catholic countries, actors have always been treated with great contumely. The priests and monks formerly promoted the performance of mysteries and other superstitious representations, because it supported the influence of their doctrines, and tended to rivet more firmly the bonds of mental slavery; but they refused acts of common charity, and even burial rites, to the unhappy performers in return. Such is priestcraft: they who reprobated stage-players on the score of a vicious profession, preached the holiness and infallibility of Popes who committed incest and sealed their crimes with blasphemy.* The latest instance of bigot zeal exerted against the inanimate body of a performer in France, was after the return of the Bourbons in Jan. 1815, when the funeral of Madame Haucourt, on arriving at the burying-ground of Père La Chaise, at Paris, was refused the rite of burial by the minister, who wished to restore, with the temporal, the spiritual customs of old times. The indignant populace, highly to its honour, compelled the priest to do his duty by force; and such was the popular effervescence, that the experiment of a second refusal will hardly be ventured on again in that city.

We may congratulate ourselves on the increase of our stock of "harmless amusement," and the superior excellence of our actors, from the liberal view we now take of the profession. Since Garrick appeared, a theatrical race, fostered by the public, of honourable lives and highly talented, have unfolded to us, better than a thousand commentators could do it, the noble conceptions of our dramatic writers. Theatrical talent has increased with the consideration it has received in society. We are now in a third era of histrionic excellence within four-score years: the first beginning with Garrick, the second with Kemble, Cooke, and Mrs. Siddons, and the third with Kean, Young, and others. In no era of our stage history has the aggregate of talent on the boards

* For example, Pope Alexander VI. who lived in a state of incest with his sister, and had her painted as a Madonna!

surpassed the present. Of this, Drury-lane is a sufficient proof. An actress like Mrs. Siddons is, perhaps, wanting, and may never be supplied; but from Kean and Young to the most inferior characters, there is, at Drury-lane, power and *matériel* such as none of our theatres have before exhibited at the same moment. The tragedies of Shakspeare, that we have been told would not half fill a house during the rage for the “gorgons, hydras, and chimeras dire,” of melodrama, have been played to overflowing benches. Othello and Iago have not cloyed the public taste, which, it now clearly appears, is not so vicious as some blundering managers have been interested in representing it, to cover their own deficiencies.

I confess I love the theatre, for I have received impressions there which no words from human lips have ever produced any where else. I have leaned on the benches, in forgetfulness of all around me but the scene, and, wrapped in a world of ideality, stored up sensations that will, by and by, feed the thoughts of declining years. The tones of the actor's voice blended themselves with the words of the poet so forcibly, that his name has become associated with them, and I can scarcely remember the one without recalling the other. Kemble's unequalled delivery of certain passages when playing Penruddock, his pathos and heart-thrilling tones, softened into mellowness by intervening time, still come over my mind like a romantic music. It may be, therefore, that I am somewhat prejudiced in favour of the profession, but it is clear to me that I have no attachment for it which is not grounded in reason and reflection; and it demands very much more than what is understood in the term “worldly custom,” to convince me I am erroneous in my view of the subject. In all professions there are worthy and unworthy members; but the tragedian, who ranks high in public favour, must be a gifted man, and is therefore entitled to respect. If of unimpeachable character, hard indeed is his lot if he be not equal to a shopkeeper or an attorney in estimation—he who must unite judgment with personal and intellectual qualifications—he who must be a student of the works of genius and the expounder of them to the world, whose pursuit calls into exercise the most vigorous faculties of the mind, and is neither mean and pettifogging on the one hand, nor a tame retailing of ledger-accounts and sordid bargaining on the other. The preference bestowed on riches, the meanest but most influential of possessions, must not be suffered to contravene the truth. The actor who instructs and amuses the public, and who stands well in public opinion, is a being far higher in the intellectual scale than the stockjobber with his plum, or the city gripeall who has amassed his million for the future dissipation of his heirs. There is, too, a reason why actors should be duly estimated in society, arising from a claim on our sympathies. They who delight us through life, leave no marks behind of all their toils to please, of their peculiar excellences and the attractions that commanded the applauses of thousands. The poet, the author, the sculptor, dies and leaves unperishable records of his labours; the soldier's achievement is preserved in history;—but the actor consigns no legacy to posterity. His glory is as evanescent as the clap of the multitude, and perishes with himself; he is, therefore, on the score of generosity, entitled to the more consideration when living, in proportion as his lot in this respect is unfelicitous.

In regard to moral worth, I believe we have seen as much of it among the professors of the stage as among an equal number in other walks of life; and there has been this advantage on the side of the most peccable, that their vices have seldom been varnished by hypocrisy. They were for ever in the public gaze, and the smallest speck was magnified in proportion; but it was never their custom to disguise, under the specious veil of canting, any errors into which they had unhappily fallen; and this is of itself almost a redeeming virtue. On the other side, let the conduct of many actors of both sexes that have been public favourites, be scrutinized even by malevolence, and what will be found registered against them? They have in moral worth been equal to other individuals in society that are respected, and their claims on this score have been tacitly allowed, particularly among actresses. Away, then, with what remains of this unworthy prejudice!

Perhaps some grounds for dislike to the profession may have appeared in the tendency of certain pieces brought on the boards, and the passages offensive to good morals which they contain. This is not the fault of the actor, but of the author, censor, and manager. As a whole, the character of our actors is infinitely beyond the morality of our theatre. We owe much to the stage, but it must be allowed that its secondary class of writers have not made it so instructive or moral as they might have done. Some of the lighter pieces which live but for a moment, are the production of authors who write for the galleries, and have nothing in point of reputation to lose. It is not the piece which holds up to admiration certain points of character in a thief or a murderer that will produce an evil effect on society. Public opinion has stamped both the one and the other of these characters with infamy. In spite of what has been said respecting Macheath, for example, it is highly improbable that any one ever became a robber from seeing the character performed. It is holding up to the admiration of the vulgar, unmingled with reprobation, lesser scoundrels whose vices are not held in equal detestation, being offences against good manners rather than breaches of laws universally recognized, that is to be condemned. "Tom and Jerry" is a piece of this class. Had its coarse exhibition of low-lived vices been kept to a picture of vice duly satirized and turned into ridicule, it might have done good. But it is easy to see that where blackguardism and folly are exhibited without due reprobation, the ignorant and vulgar of every rank in life will admire the hero of the tale, when his habits and opinions are in unison with their own, and he is made an object of admiration rather than contempt. Our guardians of the night and police magistrates can bear testimony to this truth. Next to the author, the censor intervenes, who ought, if such an interference should be tolerated at all, to have an eye on the indecencies and immoral tendencies of the works of obscure stage-writers. His notions of morality, however, are generally merged in his politics. He is, in fact, only a political automaton, and it is difficult to say whether he could be any thing else without much increasing the mischief of his office; for who could set bounds to puritanical curtailments and alterations which would be as likely to exceed reasonable limits as to keep within them? Yet while such an office exists, a little more attention to this subject might not be misplaced. Still he is so much the creature of accident, as to office,

that he may or may not have grasp of mind enough, little as it requires, to comprehend the true drift of a dramatic piece; he may see it free from sentences of constructive sedition, and think his duty executed. I am astonished how such a play as "The Hypocrite" is tolerated in the present day. In a dramatic view it is unnatural and absurd; morality it has none. It is forced in every way, and it would be worthy the good sense of the managers of the great theatres to consign it to well-merited oblivion, instead of suffering its disgusting indecencies to flush the cheeks of the better part of their audiences. Its late reappearance was in very bad taste on Mr. Elliston's part. This play was written to satirize Whitfield, who, with his contemporary and friend Wesley, were virtuous, well-meaning, but enthusiastic men, of blameless conduct and irreproachable lives. However erroneous they might be deemed on points where all can be but matter of opinion, they did infinite good in reforming the morals and softening the brutality of the lower classes, from the colliers of Walsall to the miners of the West. Their labours were, as Lord Chatham would say, more those of a college of fishermen than of a conclave of bishops or cardinals. Notwithstanding their aberration from the statute faith, they were just and conscientious men. Are such men fit objects of disgusting satire in the present enlightened times? Ought not the good sound sense of an English audience (the best censor in a free country) to put down that which no excellence of acting can sanction?

We should wish to see all theatrical reform effected by public taste, rather than by any other mode. How often, after being delighted with the exhibition of a noble tragedy, that has elevated the mind to lofty feeling, and roused to mental activity every latent virtue—how often are we disgusted by an afterpiece calculated to eradicate the good impression the tragedy has produced, indebted to *double entendre* for wit, and to the slang of St. Giles's for phraseology. Now that Drury-lane Theatre is all that can be wished as to elegance of building, accommodation of the audience, and excellence of its company—now that it stands once more the first of our histrionic exhibitions—now that the public fill the house to suffocation on the acting of legitimate tragedy by Kean and Young—it becomes the manager to fix on a firm basis a national standard of taste in his department for our other theatres to imitate. We could wish to see there the selection of tragedy and comedy made from among the best-written and most pure in the language, and a stern rejection of all mawkish trash, under whatever name introduced. The afterpieces should include none but such as have sterling merit in writing, real wit, and a perfect freedom from those indelicacies and jurations resorted to by sterile writers to fill an hiatus or wind up the climax of a stupid sentence. We could wish to see some of our sound old tragedies, and our old genteel comedy, preserved from desuetude. A singleness of object, on the part of a manager possessing freedom of thought, and a bold reliance on common sense rather than on recorded opinion, might effect much good, and complete a theatre that we might justly be proud to array in *all things* against any in a foreign country—a *Théâtre Anglais*, where a pure national literature, excellence of acting, and a due regard to decorum, may save us the trouble of apologizing to strangers for faults which *they* do not tolerate, and give them a clear idea of a drama

adhering to the verity of existing things, and carrying to the summit of perfection the effect of the romantic or Shakspearian school, which must finally, in every country, take the uppermost place as the mirror of nature. Let Mr. Elliston think originally in this respect, and complete the good work he has entered upon ; for he has given us a novel and high treat by uniting the excellences of our two most distinguished actors in one piece—let him purify the stage of every thing objectionable on the score of taste, and leave behind him a name as the perfecter of our theatrical exhibitions, in propriety*, costume, style, judgment, and morals. There is one difficulty, however, for him to overcome, which, it must be confessed, is embarrassing, namely, the subjugation of the gallery audience to a well-regulated conduct. The pit was formerly the place of the critic, affording, from its situation, the greatest facility of hearing and judging. The applause or censure of the pit decided every thing ; it was the mean between the aristocracy of the boxes, and the radicalism of the galleries. At present the pit is generally filled with a respectable but uncritical audience. The amateurs of the performance are scattered through the boxes, in solitary observation. The tempered and judicious censure or applause once displayed by the pit is exchanged for the ignorant howlings and noisy interruptions of the galleries. Inferior actors, particularly in the more vulgar parts, play to the galleries, that now possess such a petty sovereignty over the whole house as it would be a slur on the audience to tolerate, were they not without a remedy to help themselves. Many reasonable alterations, for which a manager would be greeted with applause, would be overruled by the rabble. Farce-writers and melodram-compounders interlard their abortive productions with the vilest diction, to catch the never-failing applause of the “ gods,” as they are styled. Thus the gallery is, at present, nearly the dictator of the house,—a state of affairs which it is difficult for a manager to alter. The gallery is vast in size, and its receipts are a great object in an expensive establishment ; but its clamours operate against the interest of the other parts of the house, and its subjugation to the rules of good order seems a work indispensable to complete success. To hope better things from an amelioration of manners in the class that frequents the galleries is an idle expectation ; to submit to it for ever will be a stigma both on the manager and the other parts of the house. Some have proposed to divide the gallery longitudinally, and thus prevent a concerted system of action. In what mode that good can be effected, which, unless effected, gives no hope of perfecting our theatrical exhibitions, is matter worthy the serious consideration of all who feel the charm of rational entertainment, and hold in estimation the pleasures of imagination and poesy. Thousands now do not visit the theatre at all, who, if these objections were removed, would be frequent visitants. The theatre, they justly observe, should be a school of the purest language, and a scene of decorum and refinement ; it should be visited as an intellectual feast, in which “ no crude surfeit reigned.” This subject, which involves the real interest of the drama, has not often enough been brought before the

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public, nor efforts commensurate to its importance been attempted to change it.

I write this with no knowledge of any manager personally, and with no wish to exalt the manager of Drury-lane above his merits. He has effected much for the public gratification, but much yet remains to be done. It is still farther in his favour, that he has shewn his willingness to give a fair trial to the production of every author that has apparently any chance of success. This is praiseworthy, and adds another laurel to his theatrical crown; but he must leave the author to his own judgment, and not shackle him by restraints. A practice has lately arisen of writing for an actor, and getting a play up with a character purposely drawn for him to sustain. Such a production never can be a happy one either for author or manager, and can only be of temporary interest. It is the actor's place to study the poet, not the poet the actor. In late times, among other strange things, we have seen most extraordinary acknowledgments put forth by authors to performers, indicating that the latter have, occasionally at least, pretensions humiliating to the pride of authorship, which the world would never have guessed, but for the confession—a confession no less novel and astounding to contemporaries than to ourselves. We are gravely told of an actor (Mr. Macready), in the dedication of "Julian," lately performed at Covent-garden, that his powers have inspired, and his taste "has fostered the tragic dramatists of the age!!" A piece of information, then first communicated to them, of which they had lived in unfelicitous ignorance, and would have so continued to live but for this important disclosure. "Elegance and luxuriance of praise" are revived from old Dryden's days,—this is to the full as bad as "your Lordship in satire and Shakspeare in tragedy!"

I fear I have occupied more space than I ought in thus noticing, in a desultory way, subjects which would seem to demand more methodic details. Those, however, who love the theatre, will agree in thinking that what remains to be done is so obvious, that the task of execution is alone wanting, and that this rests with the manager who possesses sufficient originality of mind to act by the rules of good taste alone in the improvement of our dramatic entertainments.*

Y.

* As one step, let the text of Shakspeare be forthwith restored in his plays, and the interpolated trash rejected which has so long disgraced the representation of some of his best works.

ACTORS AND THEATRICALS.

IN England alone actors have occupied somewhat of that consideration in society to which they are entitled. Not that we are by any means a theatrical people, but the dictates of good sober sense have shewn us that there is no reason why the professor of a liberal and ingenious art should be undervalued upon the stale plea of custom. It is here a received rule, to a given extent, that "worth makes the man," or, to be more explicit, that the honourable character and conduct of an individual is more looked to than his profession, provided, indeed, he be not poor, for that is an "unconquerable bar" to social notice. There is feeling and good sense in this discrimination, as far as it goes; it is worthy the better portion of the better class of English society. I say "better portion," because Lord Chesterfield observes that "people of the first quality can be as silly, ill-bred, and worthless, as people of meaner degree;" and there are some of the higher orders of English society, high only in pride and fortune, that have about as correct a notion of the claims of intellect upon them, as an Esquimaux would have of the nature of Newton's Fluxions, were he questioned respecting them. But though actors are held in far more estimation here than in foreign countries, still many have a ridiculous prejudice against the profession, which they should overcome.

This sort of prejudice, though very unreasonable, is of old standing. The ancients, it is well known, held the profession of an actor in disesteem; but there are certain contradictions respecting them which it would be difficult to clear up. Lucian says that a great knowledge of music, poetry, rhetoric, and philosophy, were necessary, to succeed on the stage in his time. Now, this being the case, it is singular that the respect universally paid to persons versed in these arts should not have operated in favour of those so accomplished in them. We know very little of the ancient stage, but what we do know leads us to believe that tragedy was exhibited on it more in the way of declamation than as an imitation of nature. A large portion of the ancient stage entertainments consisted of mimicry and antics, the professors of which had, perhaps, no great claim to respect, and the comedy of the ancients was of a low kind. They used masques in their stage performances, which must have effectually concealed the different changes of countenance produced by every attempt at expression; and this gives us additional reason to believe that certain regulated gestures and a well-toned voice, with a recitation, rather than acting as we now understand it, were all the ancients valued in a performer. The accounts which have come down to us, however, tend to shew that some actors of good morals and attainments were held in esteem by the highest ranks in Rome, as in the example of Roscius, of whom Cicero speaks so highly. It is therefore probable, that the majority of performers were low, dissolute mimics, and that the censure cast upon the whole corps had its exceptions among the higher classes of tragedians. Modern acting differs from the ancient, in its requiring greater originality, and a certain natural genius, to succeed. The power of representation of the different emotions of the mind, for which we value an actor, was no part of the qualification they deemed necessary for the stage. Their tragedy, with the chorus, could we hear it per-

formed now, would not, it is likely, though we were perfect masters of the language, arouse our feelings more than the simple reading. It was strictly national, and the taste for it must have been acquired by education. It appears to me that our stage performances are of a much higher order, and the performers also, because they are more universally interesting, and the scene is kept nearer to nature. Poetry should speak a universal language, and the stage should speak it too. Let us suppose the insanity of Orestes exhibited by a performer in a mask, who recites the character with a well-regulated tone and emphasis: it is obvious that he would add but little comparative effect to the poetry of the author. Suppose the same piece performed by Garrick or Kean, their acting would be felt and understood, wherever the language was comprehended, because nature shews the same emotions every where under similar causes of excitement. There is a poetical feeling necessary for a modern actor. He must be imaginative, and have an acquaintance with the deep secrets of the mind, which cannot be taught him by art. The actor of the ancients was, perhaps, more the being of study and artifice. Such we may conjecture, for we can conjecture only, is the difference between the two; and if so, the advantage is certainly on the side of the moderns.

In catholic countries, actors have always been treated with great contumely. The priests and monks formerly promoted the performance of mysteries and other superstitious representations, because it supported the influence of their doctrines, and tended to rivet more firmly the bonds of mental slavery; but they refused acts of common charity, and even burial rites, to the unhappy performers in return. Such is priestcraft: they who reprobated stage-players on the score of a vicious profession, preached the holiness and infallibility of Popes who committed incest and sealed their crimes with blasphemy.* The latest instance of bigot zeal exerted against the inanimate body of a performer in France, was after the return of the Bourbons in Jan. 1815, when the funeral of Madame Raucourt, on arriving at the burying-ground of Père La Chaise, at Paris, was refused the rite of burial by the minister, who wished to restore, with the temporal, the spiritual customs of old times. The indignant populace, highly to its honour, compelled the priest to do his duty by force; and such was the popular effervescence, that the experiment of a second refusal will hardly be ventured on again in that city.

We may congratulate ourselves on the increase of our stock of "harmless amusement," and the superior excellence of our actors, from the liberal view we now take of the profession. Since Garrick appeared, a theatrical race, fostered by the public, of honourable lives and highly talented, have unfolded to us, better than a thousand commentators could do it, the noble conceptions of our dramatic writers. Theatrical talent has increased with the consideration it has received in society. We are now in a third era of histrionic excellence within four-score years: the first beginning with Garrick, the second with Kemble, Cooke, and Mrs. Siddons, and the third with Kean, Young, and others. In no era of our stage history has the aggregate of talent on the boards

* For example, Pope Alexander VI. who lived in a state of incest with his sister, and had her painted as a Madonna!

surpassed the present. Of this, Drury-lane is a sufficient proof. An actress like Mrs. Siddons is, perhaps, wanting, and may never be supplied; but from Kean and Young to the most inferior characters, there is, at Drury-lane, power and *matériel* such as none of our theatres have before exhibited at the same moment. The tragedies of Shakspeare, that we have been told would not half fill a house during the rage for the “gorgons, hydras, and chimeras dire,” of melodrama, have been played to overflowing benches. Othello and Iago have not cloyed the public taste, which, it now clearly appears, is not so vicious as some blundering managers have been interested in representing it, to cover their own deficiencies.

I confess I love the theatre, for I have received impressions there which no words from human lips have ever produced any where else. I have leaned on the benches, in forgetfulness of all around me but the scene, and, wrapped in a world of ideality, stored up sensations that will, by and by, feed the thoughts of declining years. The tones of the actor's voice blended themselves with the words of the poet so forcibly, that his name has become associated with them, and I can scarcely remember the one without recalling the other. Kemble's unequalled delivery of certain passages when playing Penruddock, his pathos and heart-thrilling tones, softened into mellowness by intervening time, still come over my mind like a romantic music. It may be, therefore, that I am somewhat prejudiced in favour of the profession, but it is clear to me that I have no attachment for it which is not grounded in reason and reflection; and it demands very much more than what is understood in the term “worldly custom,” to convince me I am erroneous in my view of the subject. In all professions there are worthy and unworthy members; but the tragedian, who ranks high in public favour, must be a gifted man, and is therefore entitled to respect. If of unimpeachable character, hard indeed is his lot if he be not equal to a shopkeeper or an attorney in estimation—he who must unite judgment with personal and intellectual qualifications—he who must be a student of the works of genius and the expounder of them to the world, whose pursuit calls into exercise the most vigorous faculties of the mind, and is neither mean and pettifogging on the one hand, nor a tame retailing of ledger-accounts and sordid bargaining on the other. The preference bestowed on riches, the meanest but most influential of possessions, must not be suffered to contravene the truth. The actor who instructs and amuses the public, and who stands well in public opinion, is a being far higher in the intellectual scale than the stockjobber with his plum, or the city gripeall who has amassed his million for the future dissipation of his heirs. There is, too, a reason why actors should be duly estimated in society, arising from a claim on our sympathies. They who delight us through life, leave no marks behind of all their toils to please, of their peculiar excellences and the attractions that commanded the applauses of thousands. The poet, the author, the sculptor, dies and leaves unperishable records of his labours; the soldier's achievement is preserved in history;—but the actor consigns no legacy to posterity. His glory is as evanescent as the clap of the multitude, and perishes with himself; he is, therefore, on the score of generosity, entitled to the more consideration when living, in proportion as his lot in this respect is unfelicitous.

In regard to moral worth, I believe we have seen as much of it among the professors of the stage as among an equal number in other walks of life ; and there has been this advantage on the side of the most peccable, that their vices have seldom been varnished by hypocrisy. They were for ever in the public gaze, and the smallest speck was magnified in proportion ; but it was never their custom to disguise, under the specious veil of canting, any errors into which they had unhappily fallen ; and this is of itself almost a redeeming virtue. On the other side, let the conduct of many actors of both sexes that have been public favourites, be scrutinized even by malevolence, and what will be found registered against them ? They have in moral worth been equal to other individuals in society that are respected, and their claims on this score have been tacitly allowed, particularly among actresses. Away, then, with what remains of this unworthy prejudice !

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have the impudence to ape his manner, without the sense to imitate his qualities. The commendation bestowed upon fools is a robbery from men of merit. Whilst an ignorant public is stupid enough to applaud mere starers, and starters, and stampers, they will never have any thing else to admire.

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE.

The only circumstance worthy of remark between our last report and the closing of this house for the season has been the retirement of Mr. Kemble from the stage. This event took place on the 23d of June, after the performance of *Coriolanus* for his own benefit. The interest excited by its approach surpassed every thing of the kind on similar occasions. The whole of the boxes and places which could be secured had been taken a fortnight before; and in their anxiety to witness the last appearance of this great actor, numbers began to collect round the entrance of the pit so early as twelve o'clock. The rush on the opening of the doors was in consequence tremendous, though not productive of any serious accident, and the house was instantly filled. Never did Kemble perform the arduous part of *Coriolanus* with more energy and grandeur, and his unabated professional powers served only to add to the public regret for the immediate loss of his exertions. The audience eagerly seized every passage in the play that could be applied to the situation of their justly valued favourite, and marked them with enthusiastic applause. Between the acts an address to Mr. Kemble, printed on a folio sheet, was circulated through the house. A copy of it printed in gold letters upon white satin, encompassed by a border of fanciful ornaments embroidered in gold, and accompanied by a superb crown of laurel, was handed to the front of the pit to be presented at the conclusion. At the fall of the curtain, placards were exhibited in different parts of the pit and galleries, inscribed with this further manifestation of the public wish, "No farewell for ever from Kemble." Owing to a misconception that these were designed to prevent Mr. Kemble from delivering *any* address, murmurs immediately arose. But this circumstance only afforded an additional proof of public esteem. The idea that a prevention or disrespect was intended, occasioned some tumult, although it soon appeared that the audience had but one wish and opinion. A short but anxious interval ensued. The curtain was again drawn up; a grand street of Rome, which forms a principal scene in the tragedy, was displayed; and Kemble, in the Roman costume, in which he had performed *Coriolanus*, came forward. One of those lofty public edifices which adorned the capital of the ancient world rose behind him. The impression produced by this unison, on such an occasion, was deeply felt. It appeared as if Kemble, the Roman spirit, the Roman grandeur, and Rome itself, were about to disappear from the stage, and leave a chasm which could no more be filled.

BRITISH THEATRICALS.

The following account of the *scene* which was exhibited on the occasion of Mr. Kemble's retiring from the stage, which we have taken from a London Magazine, is calculated to impress us with great respect, both for the actor and for the audience. For the actor that in that elevated path which he ever trod, he should have so wonderfully excelled; for the audience that they had not only the discernment to discriminate that excellence, but the sense to appreciate it. The performer whose utterance and action can give full force to the conceptions of Shakspeare, must share largely in the best boons of nature and education, and will always command the regard and the veneration of the lovers of genius. The only way to produce actors of the character and eminence of Kemble, is, whilst we bow before his worth, to look down with scorn upon the coxcombs who

The ties of sympathy which had for more than thirty years bound him to all that was great and noble in the drama, and knit him as it were into the heart of the public, were about to be at once, and it was to be feared, for ever, dissolved. Those who had seen his outset in their youth, felt in his retiring the interests of the past, the present, and the narrow future, crowded into the single moment. Several long and continued thunders of applause rendered it impossible for him to be heard for some time. At length in a faltering voice, and often interrupted by his feelings, he addressed the audience :—

“Ladies and Gentlemen, I have appeared before you for the last time.” (Here he was interrupted by loud cries of “No, No,” from all parts of the house.) He then resumed, “I come now to close my long professional career.” (He was again obliged to stop by loud cries of “No, No—No retiring—No farewell for ever.”) This tumult of applause and the reiterated proofs of public esteem affected him to tears, and rendered him still less capable of collecting firmness. When he proceeded his tone was broken and his countenance agitated.—“Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not wish to trespass on your time—I feared I should not have sufficient fortitude for this occasion—and it was my wish to have withdrawn in silence from you :” (loud cries and applauses :) “but I suffered myself to be persuaded, that if only from old custom, a few words would be expected from me at parting.” (Renewed applauses.) “The invariable kindness with which you have ever treated me, from the first night of my coming forward as a candidate for public favour down to this painful moment, will be eternally remembered with gratitude. Such talents as I have been master of have always cheerfully been exerted in your service; whether as an actor in the character allotted to me, or as a manager, it has ever been my ambition to add to the splendour and propriety of the drama, and more especially to exert myself to give effect to the plays of our divine Shakspeare. (Loud applause.) On every occasion, permit me to say, all my efforts, all my studies, all my labours have been made delightful to me by the constant applause and approbation with which you have been pleased to reward them. (Applauses.) Ladies and Gentlemen! I must take my leave of you, and I now most respectfully bid you a long and unwilling farewell.” At these words he bowed with much agitation, and amidst a repetition of enthusiastic applauses and cries of regret from all parts of the house, hastily withdrew from the stage. The copy of the address on white satin and the crown of laurel were then delivered to the celebrated French tragedian Mr. Talma, in the orchestra, with a request that he would fling them upon the stage. This was done, and Mr. Fawcett, the stage manager, was summoned to present them to Mr. Kemble. As an additional mark of honour to the valued

favourite, the audience forbade any after-piece : and the performance of the night was closed in compliance with their wishes.

Here follows a correct copy of the address printed on the satin scroll, which is from the energetic pen of Mr. WILLIAM CAREY :—

TO
JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE, ESQ.

OF THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

Sir,—After having so long received from the display of your eminent abilities, the greatest degree of gratification and instruction, which the highest class of histrionic representation could bestow, we think upon the near approach of your intended farewell to the stage with sentiments of deep concern, and if possible, an increase of respect. In justice to the interest of the drama and to our own feelings we would fain postpone the moment of a separation so painful. Fitted by the endowments of nature and by classical acquirements, by high association, and the honourable ambition of excellence, you have for upwards of thirty years dignified the profession of an actor by your private conduct and public exertions in the British capital. We beheld, in your personification the spirit of history and poetry united. In embodying the characters of Shakspeare and our other dramatic writers, you were not contented to revive an outward show of their greatness alone :—the splendour of an antique costume—the helmet and armour—the crown and sceptre—all that pertains to the insignia of command are easily assumed. When you appeared the habit and the man were as soul and body. The age and country in which we live were forgotten. Time rolled back a long succession of centuries. The grave gave up its illustrious dead. Cities and nations, long passed away, re-appeared; and the elder brothers of renown, the heroes and statesmen, the sages and monarchs of other years, girt in the brightness of their shadowy glory, lived and loved, and fought, and bled before us. We beheld in you, not only their varying looks and gestures, their proud march and grandeur of demeanour; but the elevated tone of their mind, and the flame of their passions. We mean not here to enumerate the various characters in which you have shone as the light of your era: but we may be allowed to say that *you excelled in that which was most excellent*; that wherever the grandeur of an exalted mind was united with majesty of person; wherever the noblest organ was required for the noblest expression; wherever nature, holding up the mould of character, called for an impression from the most precious of metals, there she looked to KEMBLE as her gold; there you shone with pre-eminent lustre. In the austere dignity of Cato, the stern patriotism of Brutus, the fiery bearing of Coriolanus, and the mad intoxication of Alexander, you transported your audience in imagination alternately to Greece, Rome, or Babylon.

Seconded by the well painted illusion of local scenery, you seemed every where in your native city : every where contemporary with the august edifices of the ancient world. In you some of those great characters lived, and we cannot conceal our apprehensions, that when you withdraw, we shall lose sight of them for a long time, and as life is short, perhaps for ever. In expressing this sentiment we feel a warm respect for every actor of genius. A mind like yours would be wounded by any compliment that was not founded in the most liberal sense of general desert. It is an additional merit in you to have obtained distinction in an age of refinement, and from a public qualified to appreciate your powers. A small light shines in darkness ; but you have flourished amidst a circle of generous competitors for fame, whose various abilities we admire ; and in whose well earned applause we proudly join. They behold in the honours which your country pays to you, the permanence of that celebrity which they have already so de-

servedly acquired, and a sure pledge of the future honours which await the close of their professional career. We, therefore, earnestly entreat that you will not at once deprive the public of their gratification, and the stage of your support. We entreat you not to take your final leave on the night named for your last performance. All we ask is, that you will consent to perform a few nights each season, so long as your health will permit. We adjure you to grant this request, by your own fame—an object which is not more dear to you than it is to us, and we confidently rely upon your respect for public opinion that you will not cover us with the regret of a refusal. We have spared the annexation of signatures as inadequate and unnecessary, even if our numbers and restricted limits permitted that form. The pealing applause of the audience, each night of your performance, *and the united voice which accompanies this*, are the best attestation of the public sentiment.

Monday, June 23d, 1817.

HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ
Ipse sibi tradit spectator.* *Hor. de Arte Poetica.*

CHAPTER I.

OBJECTIONS TO THE STAGE CONSIDERED AND REFUTED.

THAT amusement is necessary to man, the most superficial observation of his conduct and pursuits may convince us. The Creator never implanted in the hearts of all his intelligent creatures one common universal appetite without some corresponding necessity; and that he has given them an instinctive appetite for amusements as strong as any other which we labour to gratify, may be clearly perceived in the efforts of infancy, in the exertions of youth, in the pursuits of manhood, in the feeble endeavours of old age, and in the pastimes which human creatures, even the uninstructed savage nations themselves, have invented for their relaxation and delight. This appetite evinces a necessity for its gratification as much as hunger, thirst, and weariness, intimate the necessity of bodily refection by eating, drinking, and

* What we hear

With weaker passion will affect the heart

Than when the faithful eye beholds the part.—*Francis*

sleeping; and not to yield obedience to that necessity, would be to counteract the intentions of Providence, who would not have furnished us so bountifully as he has with faculties for the perception of pleasure, if he had not intended us to enjoy it. Had the Creator so willed it, the process necessary to the support of existence here below might have been carried on without the least enjoyment on our part: the daily waste of the body might be repaired without the sweet sensations which attend eating and drinking; we might have had the sense of hearing without the delight we derive from sweet sounds; and that of smelling without the capability of enjoying the fragrance of the rose: but He whose wisdom and beneficence are above all comprehension, has ordained in another and a better manner, and annexed the most lively sensations of pleasure to every operation he has made necessary to our support, thereby making the enjoyment of pleasure one of the conditions of our existence. This is an unanswerable refutation of one of the most abominable doctrines of the atheists—the overbalance of evil; and as such, that wise and amiable divine, doctor Paley, has made use of it in his *Natural Theology*. It is true, that yielding to the tendency of our frail, overweening nature to push enjoyment of every kind to its utmost verge, men too often overshoot the mark, and frustrate the object they have most at heart, by eagerness to accomplish it. For though to a reasonable extent and in certain circumstances, all enjoyments are harmless, they degenerate into crimes, when excessively indulged, and particularly when the imagination is overstrained to improve their zest, or to refine or exalt them beyond the limits which Nature and sobriety prescribe. But this can no more be alledged as a reason for renouncing the moderate use of the enjoyment, than the excesses of the drunkard or glutton for the rejection of food and drink.

That man must have amusement of some kind, “Nature speaks aloud.” He, therefore, who supplies society with entertainment unadulterated by vice, who contributes to the

pleasure without impairing the innocence of his fellow-beings, and above all, who instructs while he delights, may justly be ranked among the benefactors of mankind, and lays claim to the gratitude and respect of the society he serves. To that gratitude and respect the dramatic poet, and those who contribute to give effect to his works, are richly entitled. Accordingly history informs us that in all recorded ages theatrical exhibitions have been not only held in high estimation by the most wise, learned, and virtuous men, but sedulously cultivated and encouraged by legislators as matters of high public importance, particularly in those nations that have been most renowned for freedom and science.

In the multitude and diversity of conflicting opinions which divide mankind upon all, even the most manifest truths, we find some upon this subject. Many well-meaning, sincere christians have waged war against the enjoyment of pleasure, as if it were the will of God that we should go weeping and sorrowing through life. The learned bishop of Rochester, speaking of a religious sect which carries this principle as far as it will go, says: "their error is not heterodoxy, but excessive, overheated zeal." Thus we find that the stage has ever been with many well-meaning though mistaken men, a constant object of censure. Of those, a vast number express themselves with the sober, calm tenderness which comports with the character of christians, while others again have so far lost their temper as to discard in a great measure from their hearts the first of all christian attributes—charity. We hope, for the honour of christianity, that there are but few of the latter description. There are men however of a very different mould—men respectable for piety and for learning, who have suffered themselves to be betrayed into opinions hostile to the drama upon other grounds: these will even read plays, and profess to admire the poetry, the language, and the genius of the dramatic poet; but still make war upon scenic representations, considering them as stimulants to vice—as a kind of moral cantharides which

serves to inflame the passions and break down the ramparts behind which religion and prudence entrench the human heart. Some there are again, who entertain scruples of a different kind, and turn from a play because it is a fiction; while there are others, and they are most worthy of argument, who think that theatres add more than their share to the aggregate mass of luxury, voluptuousness, and dissipation, which brings nations to vitious refinement, enervation and decay.

In all reasoning of this kind, authority goes a great way, and therefore before we proceed any further, we will enrol under the banners of our argument a few high personages, whose names on such an occasion are of weight to stand against the world, and enumerate some great nations who revered and systematically encouraged the drama. If it can be shown that some of the most exalted men that ever lived—men eminent for virtue, high in power and distinction, and illustrious for talents, in different countries and at different times, have countenanced the stage and even written for it; nay, that some of that description have themselves been actors, further argument may well be thought superfluous: yet we will not rest the matter there, but taking those along with us as authorities, go on and probe the error to which we allude, even to the very bone.

It might not be difficult to prove by inference from a multitude of facts scattered through the history of the world, that a passion for the dramatic art is inherent in the nature of man. How else should it happen that in every age and nation of the world, vestiges remain of something resembling theatrical amusements. It is asserted that the people of China full three thousand years ago had something of the kind and presented on a public stage, in spectacle, dialogue and action, living pictures of men and manners, for the suppression of vice, and the circulation of virtue and morality. Even the Gymnosophists, severe as they were, encouraged dramatic representation. The Bramins, whose austerity in religi-

ous and moral concerns almost surpasses belief, were in the constant habit of enforcing religious truths by dramatic fictions represented in public. The great and good PILPAY the fabulist, is said to have used that kind of exhibition as a medium for conveying political instruction to a despotic prince, his master, to whom he dared not to utter the dictates of truth, in any other garb. In the obscurity of those remote ages, the evidences of particular facts are too faintly discernible to be relied upon: All that can be assumed as certain, therefore, is that the elementary parts of the dramatic art had then been conceived and rudely practised. But the first *regular* play was produced in Greece, where the great Eschylus, whose works are handed down to us, flourished not only as a dramatist, but as an illustrious statesman and warrior.

Without dwelling on the many other examples afforded by Greece, we proceed to as high authority as can be found among men: we mean Roscius the Roman actor. That extraordinary man's name is immortalized by Cicero, who has in various parts of his works panegyricized him no less for his virtues than for his talents. Of him, that great orator, philosopher and moralist has recorded, that he was a being so perfect that any person who excelled in any art was usually called a ROSCIUS—that he knew better than any other man how to inculcate virtue, and that he was more pure in his private life than any man in Rome.

In the Roman catholic countries the priesthood shut out as far as they could from the people the instruction of the stage. For ages the fire of the HOLY inquisition kept works of genius of every kind in suppression all over the south of Europe. In France the monarch supported the stage against its enemies; but though he was able to support the actors in life, he had not power or influence sufficient to obtain for them consolation in death; the rights of the church and christian burial being refused to them by the clergy.

In England, where the clouds of religious intolerance were first broken and dispersed by the reformation, the stage has flourished, and exhibited a mass of excellence and a constellation of genius unparalleled in the annals of the world. There it has been encouraged and admired by men whose authority, as persons deeply versed in christian theology and learned as it is given to human creatures to be, we do not scruple to prefer to that of the persons who raise their voices against the stage. Milton, Pope, Addison, Johnson, Warburton, bishop of Gloucester, and many others have given their labours to the stage. In many of his elegant periodical papers Mr. ADDISON has left testimonies of his veneration for it, and of his personal respect for players; nay, he wrote several pieces for the stage, in comedy as well as tragedy; yet we believe it will not be doubted that he was an orthodox christian. The illustrious POPE, in a prologue which he wrote for one of Mr. Addison's plays—the tragedy of Cato—speaks his opinion of the stage in the following lines:

To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
To raise the genius, and to mend the heart,
To make mankind in conscious virtue bold,
Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold:
For this the tragic Muse first trod the stage,
Commanding tears to stream through every age.
Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
And foes to virtue wondered how they wept.

Warburton, the friend of Pope, a divine of the highest rank, wrote notes to Shakspeare. And an infinite number of the christian clergy of as orthodox piety as any that ever lived, have admired and loved plays and players. If in religion doctor Johnson had a fault, it certainly was excessive zeal—and assuredly his morality cannot be called in question. What his idea of the stage was, may be inferred from his labours, and from his private friendships. His preface to Shakspeare—his illustrations and characters of the bard's plays—his tragedy of Irene, of which he diligently superin-

tended the rehearsal and representation—his friendship for Garrick and for Murphy—his letters in the *Idler* and *Rambler*, from one of which we have taken our motto for the *Dramatic Censor*, and his constant attendance on the theatre, loudly proclaim his opinion of the stage. To him who would persist to think sinful that which the scrupulous Johnson constantly did, we can only say in the words of one of Shakspeare's clowns—"God comfort thy capacity."

One example more. Whatever his political errors may have been, the present old king of England can never be suspected of coldness in matters of divinity, or of heterodoxy in religion. His fault in that way leans to the other side—for it is doubted by the most intelligent men in England whether his zeal does not border on excess. He has all his life too taken counsel from those he thought the best divines; yet he has done much to encourage the stage, and greatly delighted in scenic representations—particularly in comedy. But as a much stronger proof of his esteem for the drama, we will barely mention one fact: When his majesty first read Arthur Murphy's tragedy of the *Orphan of China*, he sent the poet a present of a thousand guineas.

The notion that the theatre should be avoided as a stimulant to the passions deserves some respect on account of its antiquity; for it is as old as the great grand-mother of the oldest man living. In good times of yore, when ladies were not so squeamish as they are now about words, because they did not know their meaning, but were more cautious of facts, because the meaning of facts cannot be misunderstood, young men had a refuge from the temptations of the stage in the reserved deportment and full clothing of domestic society, we cannot wonder that the good old ladies who abhorred the slightest immodesty in dress little, if at all less than they abhorred actual vice, should urge to their sons the necessity of keeping aloof from the allurements of the theatre. If at that time the costume of the stage differed essentially from that of private life, and was the reverse of modest, or if the actresses indulged in meretricious airs

which dared not be shown in domestic society, there was a very just pretence, or rather indeed there was the most cogent reason for preaching against the theatre. But at this day, no hypothesis of the kind can be allowed. That beautiful young women ornamented with every decoration which art can lend to enhance their charms will perhaps excite admiration and licentious desires, is true; but that those arts are more generally practised, or those incitements more strongly or frequently played off on the boards of the theatre than in respectable private life, our eyes forbid us to believe. He who looks from the ladies on the stage to those seated on the benches, and compares their dress and artificial allurements must have either very strong nerves or very bad sight, if he persist in saying that there is more danger to be apprehended from the former than the latter. He knows very little of modern manners and must be a very suckling in the ways of the world who imagines that a young man has any thing to fear from the actresses on the stage, who has gone through the ordeal of a common ball-room, or even walked of a fine day through our streets. The ladies of London, Dublin, New-York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, have thrown those of the stage quite into the back ground in the arts of the toilet. Nor is this qualification confined to those of the *haut-ton*, but has descended to tradesmen's wives and daughters; to chambermaids, laundresses, and wenches of the kitchen white, yellow, and black, coloured and uncoloured.

Familiarity with impressive objects soon robs them of their influence; and if our natural disgust and anger at the shameful innovations in the female costume for which Great Britain and America stand indebted to the *virtues* of France, be blunted by the constant obtrusion of them on our sight, it is to be hoped that the pernicious influence of them upon public morals will be diminished also. In those regions where a tropical sun renders clothing cumbersome, and the costume of the ladies of necessity exceeds a little that of ours in transparency and scantiness, familiarity renders it

harmless; little or nothing is left for the imagination to feed upon; cheapened by their obviousness, the female charms are rejected by the fancy which loves to dwell on what it only guesses at, or has but rarely seen, and the youthful heart finds its ultimate safety in the apparent excess of its danger. Thus the stage, if it ever possessed, has lost its vitious allurements, as a bucket of water is lost in the ocean. To test this reasoning by matter of fact we appeal to the general feeling, and have no fear of being contradicted when we assert that, with reference to their comparative numbers, more mischievous throbs have been excited in every theatre in London, New-York, and Philadelphia for some years past before, than behind the curtain.

We are aware that there are some who will object, as a thing taken for granted, the greater licentiousness of a player's life; but this, before it can be admitted in argument, must be proved, and the proof of it would be very difficult indeed. From a long and attentive consideration of the subject, founded upon a perfect knowledge of the private characters of the stage, and the general complexion of society off of it, we are persuaded that in point of intrinsic virtue the players stand exactly on a par with the general mass of society. That there are offenders against the laws of morality and religion among them is certain; but it must be remembered that they labour in this respect under great disadvantages, from the publicity of their situation. There, they stand exhibited to public view, every turn of their conduct, private and public, becomes a subject of general scrutiny. Ten thousand eyes are rivetted upon them, for one that is fixed upon individuals in private life. And though it often happens that some of them are suspected whose lives are perfectly pure, none who have deviated from the paths of virtue can long keep their fall concealed. Can the same be said of the other departments of life? No. Now and then indiscretion, accident, or a total abandonment of decency brings to light the misconduct of an individual; but in ge-

neral the irregularities of private life either escape detection or are hushed up by pride. Sometimes indeed one vitious purpose occasions the detection of another, and family disgrace is revealed to pave the way to a divorce, with a view to another marriage, and perhaps to another divorce. Were the private conduct of individuals in other stations as well known as that of the people of the stage, the former would have no cause to exult at the superiority of their morals; and in truth if a candid review be taken individually of the actresses of the English stage, by which we mean every stage where the English language is spoken, it will appear that, with few exceptions, they stand highly respectable for private worth and pure moral character. In England, Scotland and still more in Ireland, an unblemished reputation is necessary to a lady's success on the stage. In some instances, the greatest favourites of the public have been driven for a time from the stage, for trespasses upon virtue, and when permitted to return were never after much more than endured. To these instances we shall have occasion to advert in the course of this work.

While we assert, on the best grounds, that the theatre may be made, by proper established regulations, a school of virtue and manners, we do not wish to conceal our persuasion that there is nothing more potent to debase and corrupt the minds of a people than a licentious stage. But it may be averred with equal truth, that the abuses of every other institution are fraught with no less mischief to the public. At this very moment the abuse of the pulpit is the parent of more public mischief in Great Britain and America than the stage ever produced in its most prolific days of vice; and it is deplorable to reflect that the former is rapidly increasing, while the vitiation of the latter has been for a century on the decline. The licentiousness of the stage in the reign of Charles II was enormous: but it was a licentiousness which the theatre in common with the whole nation derived from the court, and from a most flagitious monarch

whose example made vice fashionable. In servile compliance with the reigning taste, the greatest poets of the day abandoned true fame, and discarded much of their literary merit: Otway and Dryden sunk into the most mean and criminal slavery to it—the former with the greatest powers for the pathetic ever possessed by any man, Shakspeare excepted, has left behind him plays which in an almost equal degree excite our admiration and contempt, our indignation and our pity. It is charitable to suppose that “his poverty and not his will consented.” But Dryden had no such excuse to plead for his base subserviency to pecuniary advantage, or for the detestable licentiousness of his comedies. He who will take the pains to turn to that admirable tragedy, *Venice Preserved*, by Otway, will find in the scenes between Aquileia and the old senator Antonio enough to disgust the taste of any one not callous to all sense of delicacy. But had Juvenal lived at that period, he would have scourged Dryden out of society. To those we might add Wycherly. Congreve and other cotemporary authors succeeded: but the offences committed by those men can no more be alleged as a ground of general condemnation of the stage, than the works of lord Rochester can be set up as a reason for condemning Milton, Pope, Thomson, Goldsmith, and all our other poets, or the innumerable murders committed by unprincipled quacks, be alleged as a cause for abolishing the whole practice of medicine.

Exasperated by the outrages of the dramatic poets, on virtue and decency, Jeremy Collier, a non-juring clergyman, attacked the stage. His charge against the authors was unquestionably right; but his attack upon the stage itself, exhibited a disposition splenetic almost to misanthropy, and an austerity of principle urged to unsocial ferocity. In his fury he renounced the idea of reforming the stage; he was for abolishing it entirely. He attacked the poets with “unconquerable pertinacity, with wit in the highest degree keen and sarcastic, and with all those powers exalted and invigo-

rated by just confidence in his cause.”* Thus arose a controversy which lasted ten years, during which time authors found it necessary to become more discreet. “Comedy (says Dr. Johnson) grew more modest; and Collier lived to see the reformation of the stage.” Colley Cibber, who was one of those whose plays Collier attacked, candidly says, “It must be granted that his calling our dramatic writers to this account had a very wholesome effect upon those who ‘writ after his time. Indecencies were no longer wit; and by degrees the fair sex came again to fill the boxes on the first day of a new comedy, without fear or censure.”

Such a licentious stage as is here described well deserved the severest attacks: but what is there to justify severity now? at this day not only the success of every new play so much depends upon its purity, but so scrupulously correct in that particular is the public taste, and so abstinent from every the slightest indelicacy are the authors of plays and even farces, that not a word is uttered upon the stage from which the most timid *real* modesty would shrink. In conformity to this happy state of the general taste and morals, all the old plays that retain possession of the stage, have been cleared of their pollution, and all the offensive passages in them have been expunged; some have been entirely thrown out as incapable of amendment, and in truth, purity of sentiment, and delicacy of expression, have become so prevalent, that it is very much to be doubted whether if it were proposed to act one of Wycherly’s, Dryden’s, or Otway’s offensive plays in its original state, a set of players could be found who would prostitute themselves so far as to perform it.

From the offences of mankind arise despotic restrictions and penal laws of every kind. From the licentiousness of the stage in England, arose the licensing law which still continues to hold a heavy hand over all the dramatic productions that are acted; and which has too often been perverted to corrupt purposes.

* Dr. Johnson.

But if the abuses of the stage in the times alluded to, serve to show its power to do mischief, the general reformation in the public taste, which followed that of the dramatic writings, equally show its competency to effectuate good. Rousseau, who had little less dislike to plays and players than Jeremy Collier, says, in a letter to D'Alembert, " Let us not attribute to the stage the power of changing opinions or manners, when it has only that of following and heightening them. An author who offends the general taste may as well cease to write, for nobody will read his works. When Moliere reformed the stage he attacked modes and ridiculous customs, but he did not insult the public taste; he either followed or explained it." So far Rousseau was right. It is the public that gives the stage its bias—necessarily preceding it in taste and opinion, and pointing out the direction to its object. In return the stage gives the public a stronger impulse in morals and manners. Wherever the stage is found corrupted with bad morals, it may be taken for granted that the nation has been corrupted before it; when it labours under the evils of a bad taste, it may safely be concluded that that of the public has been previously vitiated. The truth is evident in the wretched state of dramatic taste in England at this moment, where, corrupted by the spectacles and mummary of the Italian opera, by the rage for preternatural agency acquired from the reading of ghost novels and romances, and by the introduction of German plays or translations, the people can relish nothing but melodrame, show, extravagant incident, stage effect and situation—goblins, demons, fiddling, capering and pantomime, and the managers, in order to live, are compelled to gratify the deluded tasteless multitude at an incalculable expense.

What the advantages are which could be derived from abolishing the stage can only be judged from a view of the moral state of those countries in which the drama has been for ages discouraged and held in disrepute, compared with that of countries where it has been supported and cultivated.

Spain comes nearest to a total want of a regular drama of any christian country in Europe; and if there be any person who prefers the moral state of that country to the moral state of Great Britain or America, we wish him joy of his opinion, and assure him that we admire neither his taste, his argument, nor his inference.

We have thus far entered into a vindication of the stage, not with the slightest hope of changing the opinion of its enemies, nor with the least desire to increase the admiration of its friends; but to awaken public opinion to a sense of its vast importance, and of the advantages which society may derive from giving full and salutary effect to its agency, by generous encouragement, and vigilant control—by directing its operations into proper channels, and fostering it by approbation in every thing that has a tendency to promote virtue, to improve the intellectual powers, and to correct and refine the taste, and the manners of society. This desirable end can only be attained by making it respectable, and sheltering its professors from the insult and oppression of the ignorant, the base-minded, and the illiberal. None will profit by the precepts of those whom they condemn; and the youth of the country will be very unlikely to yield to the authority of the instructor whom they see subjected to the sneers and affronts of the very rabble they themselves despise. Besides, if actors were to be treated with injustice and contumely, young gentlemen of talents and virtue would be deterred from entering into the profession; and the stage would soon become as bad as it is falsely described to be by fanatics—a sink of vice and corruption: but the wisdom and liberality of the British nation, after the example of old Rome, having, on the contrary, given to the gentlemen of the stage their merited rank in society, and raised actors and actresses of irreproachable private character, to associate with the families of peers, statesmen, legislators, and men of the highest rank in the nation, the profession is filled with persons eminently respectable for talents, learning and morals, and estimable as

those of other classes in social life—estimable as husbands, fathers, children, friends and companions. But in Great Britain, they have a twofold protection—that of the audience and that of the law—from the insults and injustice of capricious, saucy, or malignant individuals. There, the line that separates the rights of the actor from those of the auditor has been exactly defined by the highest judicial authority.* And if an individual assaults a performer by hissing† without carrying the audience, or a large majority of it, along with him, the performer has his action against his malicious assailant, and is adjudged damages as certainly as persons of any of the other professions or trades recover for an assault, a calumny, or a libel. Hence the stage is looked up to as a great school, and the eminent actors are universally looked to as the best instructors in action, elocution, orthoepy, and the component parts of oratory. By following the same liberal and wise system with respect to our stage, we may reasonably hope soon to bring it to a reputable state of competition with that of Great Britain, and in that as in most other parts of the elegancies of life, not very long hence, to place the new on a complete footing with the old country.

* By Lord Mansfield in the King's Bench, in the case of Macklin against Sparks, Miles, Reddish, and others.

† The audience, whenever an individual hisses against the sense of the house, always silence the offender by crying, "there's a goose in the pit (or wherever it is) turn him out," and if he persists they expel him by force. It is to be hoped our audiences would follow the example. It is frequently necessary.

ry is told, as of a stranger's daughter; the old peasant grows more agitated. Clari flings herself unveiled into his arms, as he is about to curse her. The curse is turned into sudden benediction; and in the midst of the general interest, the duke rushes in, proclaims his determination to marry the fugitive, declares his remorse, her innocence, is about to be shot by her father on the strength of his speech, is saved by Clari, is thus doubly loving and doubly repentant, and is married by anticipation in a lively chorus of all the characters.

The stage equipments were in the usual profusion and beauty of this Theatre; the dresses rich or picturesque: and all was done in scenery or costume that could give vigour to the natural feebleness of Melo-drama. The music is by Bishop, and an evidence of the taste and adroitness of that able composer. Some of the songs came on us with recollections of favourite though neglected airs; but the harmonies were richly combined, and the accompaniments exhibited the composer's knowledge of the orchestre. A serenade, "Sleep, gentle Lady," apparently modelled on "Glorious Apollo," was admirably sung and most favourably received. It was encored. The general character of the music is simplicity, not without some occasions for the display of the singers and even of the composer. We have not space to quote more than a few of the more advantageous specimens of the poetry:—

SONG.—Jocoso.

From flowers which we twine for the temples of love,
 Love itself may instruction receive;
 The love learn'd from Nature comes straight from above,
 Here are lessons that cannot deceive.
 'Twere surely enough to check pride in its birth,
 Ere it whispers the heart have betray'd,
 To know that the sweetest of flowrets on earth—
 The violet—grows in the shade!

To souls that are bent on a stainless career,
 What a moral the sunflower supplies,
 From morning till eve, never known to appear
 With a look turn'd away from the skies.
 And let not the soul-stricken mourner complain,
 But be taught by those blossoms of night,
 Whose solitude darkness frowns over in vain,
 'Tis in darkness their colours are bright.

SONG.—CLARI.

In the promise of pleasure, the silly believer,
 Home forsaking, to brave
 The betraying world's wave,
 Is left the world's scorn by the wily deceiver,
 And finds, but too late, that wherever we roam,
 There's no pleasure abroad like the pleasure of home.
 But droop not, poor cast-away, be not dejected,
 If still from the world's heartless bosom rejected;
 From your home on earth though cast homeless to roam,
 Hope for mercy in Heav'n, and be sure of a home.

SONG.—NICOLO.

Though the tempests of winter may sweep
 The snowing leaves from our bow'rs,
 And Flora in sorrow may weep
 Her desolate kingdom of flowers!
 Though the wild mountain torrent may tear
 The pine from his throne on the peak,
 And the bright winged bird of the air
 Drop dead at the storm spirit's shriek!
 Unheeded the ruin that's hurl'd
 From the hurricane's wide spreading wing,
 Or the frown winter casts o'er the world,
 If the heart wear the smile of the spring!

THE DRAMA.

—Whilst the Drama bows to Virtue's cause,
 To aid her precepts and enforce her laws,
 So long the just and generous will befriend,
 And triumph on her efforts will attend.

BROOKS.

LONDON THEATRES.

Covent Garden.—A new opera in three acts, entitled *Clari, or the Maid of Milan*, was produced at this theatre for the first time on the 8th May last, said to be a translation from the French by Mr. Howard Payne. Of this opera we find the following account in the London papers:

The plot is simple enough. Clari has been induced to leave her father's house by the Duke on promise of marriage. The Duke subsequently recants, and proposes that she shall live with him as his mistress. Clari, still unstained, is overwhelmed by the proposal, and determines on escaping from the palace. She effects her object by letting herself down from a balcony, to the great alarm and interest of the audience. She reaches her native village, finds its population engaged in a marriage fete, is recognised, cheered, and brought to her mother, from whom she meets a forgiving reception. Her father returns from the chase full of dejection; she is brought in veiled. Her sto-

MEMOIR OF M. TALMA,
THE FRENCH GARRICK.
(From the Literary Gazette.)

Talma, who is now in his fiftieth year, was born in France, and remained there till he attained his eighth year, when he was sent to receive a part of his education in England. It is a remarkable circumstance in this early part of his life, that he was selected to perform a principal character in a play, that was got up and performed before their Royal Highnesses the Prince Regent and Duke of York, by the proprietors of the academy where he was placed; and that, tho' he acquitted himself very well, he was so much agitated by his emotions in this his first essay, as not to recover from its effects for sometime after the performance was over. He returned to France in his fifteenth year to finish his education, remained at college a few years, and revisited England in 1783. It was at this period that he first felt an inclination for that profession, of which he was destined to become so distinguished an ornament. On seeing Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons in tragedy, he returned to France in 1786, and began to apply himself to surgery as his future profession; but his predominant passion still carrying him to the stage, M. Mole, a celebrated comic actor with whom he became acquainted, took him under his care, and, from the high opinion he entertained of his talents, introduced him to the committee of the *Theatre Français*, by whom he was engaged: in 1787 he made his first appearance in the character of Scid in Voltaire's *Mahomet*. He was then about 20.

The *debut* of Talma excited no enthusiasm. The part of Charles IX. in the tragedy of that name, by Chevier, was the only one which afforded him an opportunity of commencing and establishing his reputation. Among other things, it was observed that he devoted such minute attention to his costume and head-dress, and gave so peculiar an expression to his features, that he presented a striking resemblance to the portrait which are preserved of the monarch.

French critics have been divided in opinion concerning the merits of Talma, who is the creator of a new style of declamation on the French stage. Some have accused him of heaviness in his delivery, a hollowness of tone, and a voice which is almost always confined, and which never develops itself except by sudden bursts. Others declare him to be a model of the *beau ideal*, and an artist who has arrived at a degree of perfection which none ever before attained, and which none can in future hope to acquire.

Impartial amateurs agree that no one equals Talma in the character of a tyrant or a conspirator, such as Nero, Manlius, &c. &c. but in those which require spirit, nobleness, and dignity, like Tancréd, Orosmanes, Achilles, &c. they prefer La Fond, who at this moment shares with him the tragic sceptre of the *Theatre Français*.

The French almost despair of finding his equal—his superior they think impossible. It was not to be expected that such a man as Talma, considering the times in which he lived, could have avoided the imputation of party principles. He accordingly has been put down as of the revolutionary party; but this is an error, or rather a calumny, of his enemies, for he was, during the whole course of the moderate party, and, whatever his enemies may say to the contrary, he never made himself conspicuous. His commanding talents—his general acquirements—and, above all, the excellence of his private character, so distinguished for liberality and hospitality, cannot fail to ensure him a favorable reception in this country. He speaks English fluently, but does not intend to perform any character in an English play, nor indeed is it certain that he will in a French one, as he came here merely for his amusement.

The celebrated critic Geoffroy, perhaps a little too much imbued with the principles of the old school, frequently attacked the acting and declamation of Talma in the *Journal des Débats*. The latter who was intoxicated with the

applauses lavished upon him, could not endure the pointed censures with which the old critic daily stung him. One evening, whilst Geoffroy was at the *Theatre Français*, accompanied by his wife, and a lady and gentleman their friends, the door of his box suddenly opened while the performers were on the stage. A man appeared, and said in a loud voice, "Is M. Geoffroy here?" Without waiting for a reply, he entered the box, and seizing Geoffroy by the hand, "Come out, villain!" continued he.—"Heavens, 'tis M. Talma!" exclaimed Madame Geoffroy. The friend of the critic then repelling the tragic monarch, whose nails were already imprinted in characters of blood upon the hand of his censor, succeeded in forcing him out of the box and closing the door upon him. The door was however, opened a second time; the siege of the box again commenced, but the occupants had the advantage, and remained masters of the field of battle. Had such an affair as this occurred in England, the actor would have been tried for an *assault*. In France, however, he was dismissed with a slight reproof, which Savary, who was then minister of police, delivered to him with a smile. On the following day Geoffroy gave a description of this scene in the *Journal des Débats*, and was expert enough to turn the joke against his adversary.

Napoleon was exceedingly attached to Talma, and appointed him his reader.

We are happy in being able on the present occasion to subjoin an extract from Lady Morgan's work, further illustrative of the peculiar talents of this distinguished actor.

"*Britannicus*," says Lady Morgan, "so long the fashion, from the inimitable performance of Talma in Nero, awakened my most anxious expectations; and it was not without emotion that I saw myself, for the first time, in the great national theatre of France, and in a box chosen and procured for me by M. Talma himself. Still, however, great my expectation, however lively my impatience for the rising of the curtain, which

recalled the long-blunted vivacity of feelings of childish solicitude and curiosity, I soon perceived that I was cold, languid, and inanimate to the genuine French audience that surrounded me.—The house was an overflow at an early hour: the orchestra, cleared of all its instruments, was filled to suffocation; and the *parterre*, as usual, crowded with men (chiefly from the public schools and *lycees*, whose criticisms not unfrequently decide the fate of new pieces, and give weight to the reputation of old ones,) exhibited hundreds of anxious faces, marked countenances, and figures and costumes which might answer alike for the bands of *brigandage*, or the classes of philosophy. Some were reading over the tragedy; others were commenting particular passages; a low murmur of agitation crept through the house like the rustling of leaves to a gentle wind, until the rising of the curtain stilled every voice, composed every muscle, and riveted the very existence of the audience (if I may use the expression) upon the scene.

"The theatres of other countries assemble spectators, but an audience is only to be found in a French theatre. Through the whole five acts attention never flagged for a moment; not an eye was averted, not an ear unattending; every one seemed to have the play by heart, and every one attended, as if they had never seen it before.

"In the famous scene of *Britannicus* where Agrippina is left *tete-a-tete* with her son, to enter on her defence, Mademoiselle Georges, as the Roman empress, went through a long speech of a hundred and ten lines, with great clearness, elegance of enunciation, and graceful calmness of action.

"During the first seventy lines of this speech, Talma, as Nero, sat a patient and tranquil auditor. No abrupt interruption of haughty impatience, disdain, the curb of a long-neglected authority, was furnished by the genius of the author, or gave play to the talents of the admirable actor; and the little by-play allowed him, or rather that he

allowed himself, was not *risked*, until towards the close of the speech: it was then, however, exquisite—it was nature. The constraint of forced and half-given attention, the languor of exhaustion, the restlessness of tedium, and the struggle between some little remains of filial deference and habitual respect, blended with the haughty impatience of all dictation, were depicted, not in strong symptoms and broad touches of grimace and action, but with a keeping, a tact, a fidelity to nature indiscribably fine. His transition of attitude; his playing with the embroidered scarf round his neck, and which made a part of his most classical costume, his almost appearing to count its threads, in the vanity of his profound *ennui*, were all traits of the highest order of acting. In London, this acting would have produced a thunder of applause; In Paris it was coldly received, because it was innovation; and many a black head in the *parterre* was searching its classical recesses, for some example from some traditional authority, from Baron, or Le Kain, of an emperor being restless on his chair, or of the incident of playing with the handkerchief being at all conformable to the necessity "*de représenter noblement*," in all kings, since the time of Louis le Grand.

"Whether on the stage at the *Theatre Français*, or in the *Thuilleries*, Talma is eminently superior to the school whose rules he is obliged to obey. His great genius always appeared to me to be struggling against the methodical obstacles presented to its exertions. He is the Gulliver of the French stage tied down by *Lilliputian threads*. Before talents like his can exert their full force, and take their utmost scope, a new order of drama must succeed to the declamatory and rhyming school which now occupies the French stage. Talma is a passionate admirer of the English drama, and of Shakspeare. He speaks English fluently, and told me that he had a great desire to play in one of Shakspeare's tragedies. He did not complain, but he *hinted* at the restraint

under which his talents labored, from that *esprit de systeme*, which the French have banished from every other art, and which keeps its last hold on their stage. But he said, 'if I attempt the least innovation; if I frown a shade deeper to-night than I frowned last night, in the same character, the *parterre* are sure to call me to order.'

"The dignity and tragic powers of Talma, on the stage, are curiously but charmingly contrasted with the simplicity, playfulness, and gaiety of his most unassuming, unpretending manners off the stage. I (who had never seen *Coriolanus* in the drawing-room, but as I had seen *Coriolanus* in the Forum,) expected to meet this great tragedian in private life, in all the pomp and solemnity of his profession; the cold address, the measured phrase; in a word, I expected to meet the actor: but in the simple, unaffected manners of this celebrated person, I found only the well-bred and accomplished gentleman. Talma had, in his early life, been intimate with Buonaparte; and the ex-emperor (who never forgot the friends of the young engineer officer,) accorded the *petites entrees* of the place to the sovereign of the *Theatre Francais*. Talma saw him constantly; not, however, to give him lessons (an invention at which Buonaparte and Talma both laughed;) but to discuss his favorite topic, tragedy, of which he was passionately fond. On this subject, however, the actor frequently differed with the emperor, while the emperor as frequently dictated to the actor, greeting him, 'Eh bien! Talma, vous n'avez pas use de vos moyens hier au soir.' Napoleon always disputed the merits of comedy, and observed to a gentleman, from whom I had the anecdote, 'Si vous preferez la comedie, c'est parceque vous vieillissez.'—'Et vous, Sire,' replied Monsieur—'vous aimez la tragedie, parceque vous etes trop jeune.' "

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

NEW THEATRE.

I am heartily pleased to hear people talk so sensibly of the necessity of having a new theatre. It is a pleasing idea, and should be followed. As an inducement for those public-spirited gentlemen who *talk* of the thing, to mend their pace a little, I would promise to present them upon the first evening of their reign, a new farce so fat with humor, that their audience will have to tie a handkerchief over their heads and chins to prevent their jaws from being dislocated with laughter. As an earnest of my intention, I subjoin some part of the rude structure as extemporaneously designed.

GRUMIO.

THE BACHELORS' CLUB :

OR,....LIFE IN SWALLOW ALLEY.

(A farce in two acts.)

[Characters.]

Ensign Brown,	Mr. Charneck.
Seroot,	Mr. Edgar
Sir Doleful Dorbug,	Mr. Finn.
Vanderspeigle,	Mr. Reed.
Dr. Squash,	Mr. Brown.
Rufus Ribbener,	Mr. Williamson.
Justice Gobble,	Mr. Kiner.
Snap, (a scouring constable, clerk, associate judge, &c.)	Mr. Spear.
Fanni,	Mrs. Henry or Miss Powell.
Mrs. Dingyphat,	Mrs. Barnes.
Two elderly spinsters with their knitting apparatus, &c.	

COSTUME.

Ensign Brown. Horseman's bearskin cap, short uniform coatee, red plush breeches, jackboots and spurs, and yellow whiskers.

Seroot. Old gentleman's black velvet suit ; cocked hat.

Dorbug. Bottle-green coat with long wide skirts, dove-colored small clothes, fair boots, laced waist-coat, cane and snuff box.

Vanderspeigle. An old gentleman's suit of snuff-colour.

Dr. Squash. Suit of rusty black with a white hat.

Ribbener. Fashionable modern dress.

Fanni. White leno dress, trimmed with white satin ribbon and flowers.

Mrs. D. Calico gown with hoops, &c.

Knitters—same.

Act I. Scene—Room No. 9, in the Goose and Gridiron.

Sir Doleful Dorbug a *soi-disant* wit, and Dr. Squash a pensioned laughter. Sir Doleful rehearsing jokes from Jo Miller and drilling Dr. Squash when to laugh and in what key. N. B. The part of Dr. Squash is confined to laughing, though he is allowed to range over the various divisions of that science, from the rude horse-laugh, to the soft sentimental cackle.

Enter to them, Ensign Brown, a pompous braggadocio, and Seroot, whose countenance bears one continued expression, which expresses nothing at all. His words are always in one tone.

Dialogue. The Ensign blusters, Sir Doleful repeats his jokes, Dr. Squash laughs, Seroot sighs and makes his constant observation—" 'Tis only your imagination." *Ex. gr.*

Ensign. An internal fine evening, young gentlemen. Pink my gizzard, but here we are again, as merry and chirping as ever. Curse me, if I cant tell a bachelor in the street by his jolly countenance—

Seroot. Ensign—that's only your imagination.

Ensign. "Imagination !" Blood and oons ! D'ye mean it as a reflection on my veracity ?

Sir Doleful. *Reflection ?* he, he. That puts me in mind of when I was at college, Doctor. You see, Ensign, I had a looking-glass, and when a rascally tutor stept out of the door, I glared the sun down upon his nose, until he sneezed like a tobacconist. Egad, they were going to expel me for *casting reflections* upon the heads of the college !

Doctor Squash. Ha, ha ha, he, he, he, ho !

Sir Doleful. He, he, ha Seroot ? hah ?

Seroot. [after a pause.] Casting reflections. That's only your imagination.

Scene 2. Mrs. Dingyphat's front parlor.

Mrs. D. and two venerable spinsters knitting stockings and taking snuff. Tea about ready ; tell news, talk gossip, abuse bachelors, moralize on the approaching Bachelor's Ball. Scandalized at their having balloted for the admission of ladies. Horrid creatures.

Enter Ensign Brown, Sir Doleful and Dr. Squash, a committee to invite them to the ball. Much shocked, but finally consent.

Scene 3. Public Room in the Goose and Gridiron.

Vanderspeigle and Snap practising Billings' Psalmody. Dispute upon the comparative merits of Billings and Law. Hubhub heard at a distance. Exit Vanderspeigle and Snap.

Scene 4. The Bachelors' Club. Ensign Brown in the chair. Subject of discussion, Etiquette and costume at the approaching ball, &c. "Order ! down ! What's the question ?" all to order ! The gentleman rises in explanation. **Sir Doleful.** "I rise, sir, to offer an amendment, sir, to the amendment upon the amendatory suggestion, sir, of the gentleman in snuff-color, who doubted whether the amendment of his friend was strictly in order. Now, sir, I wish, sir, we may be *ordered* to disamend, or rather to *a-mend* this *dis-order*—This, sir, I think is the question, sir ?

Doctor Squash. He, he, ha, ha, ho !

Ensign. Silence. Hubhub - adjourn, &c.

N. B. In this scene the whole club wear glasses.

Scene 5. Mrs. Dingyphat's sitting room. Room cluttered up with flower-pots, trees and bird cages. Fanni dressed for the ball.

Enter Ribbener. Love, jealousy, reproaches, reconciliation, sentiment.

SONG—Ribbener to Fanni.

Thou hast braided thy dark flowing hair
And wreathed it with rose-buds and pearls
But dearest, neglected, thy sweet tresses are
Soft falling in natural curls.

Thou delightest the cold world's gaze,
When crowned with the flower and the gem ;
But thy lover's smile, should be dearer praise
Than the incense thou prizest from them.

The bloom on thy young cheek is bright,
With transport enjoyed too well ;
Yet less dear, than when soft as the moon-beam's light,
Or the tinge in a hyacinth bell.

And gay is thy playful tone,
As to flattery's voice thou respondest ;
But what is the praise of the cold and unknown,
To the tender blame of the foudest !

Scene 6. Procession of Bachelors and their partners to the ball at the Goose and Gridiron. Brown and Mrs. Dingyphat, Seroot and first Knitter, Vanderspeigle and second Knitter, Ribbener and Fanni, Sir Doleful and Squash.

Scene 7. The Bachelors' Ball. Vanderspeigle endeavoring to put one shuffle too much into a balance, loses his balance altogether, and flounders upon the floor, upsetting the whole line of Bachelors in his struggling. [Curtain falls amidst the confusion.]

Act II. Actions for Breach of Promise, catastrophe, - whole Club except Sir Doleful and Squash forced into matrimony. Epilogue—a ballad upon that melancholy occasion, sung by Sir Doleful and Dr. Squash, to the tune—"My name was Robert Kidd when I sailed—"

NEW DRURY-LANE THEATRE.

The new Drury-lane theatre was opened on the 10th of October. The grand entrance is at Bridgestreet, through a spacious hall, leading to the boxes and pit. This hall is supported by fine Doric columns, and illuminated by two large brass lamps: three large doors lead from this hall into the house, and into a rotunda of great beauty and elegance. On each side of the rotunda are passages to the great stairs, which are peculiarly grand and spacious; over them is an ornamented ceiling, with a turret light. The body of the theatre presents nearly three-fourths of a circle from the stage. This circular appearance is partly an optical deception, and has the effect of making the spectator imagine himself nearly close upon the stage, though seated in a centre box. The colour of the interior is gold upon green, and the relief of the boxes is by a rich crimson. There are three circles of boxes, each containing twenty-four boxes, with four rows of seats, and sufficient room between each; there are seven slip boxes on each side, ranging with the first gallery, and the like number of private boxes nearly upon a level with the pit. The boxes will hold 1200 individuals; the pit about 850; the lower gallery 480; and the upper gallery 280; in all, 2,810 persons may be accommodated. The entrance to all the boxes and pit is easy and secure. The theatre is indebted to colonel Congreve for an excellent contrivance, which promises effectually to secure the building from fire. The appearance of the house is brilliant without being gaudy, and elegant without affectation. The fronts of the boxes have all diversified ornaments, which are neatly gilt, and give a variety and relief to the general aspect. We must not omit the just praise which is due to the architect for those arrangements, which exclude the interruption

caused by indecent persons, and, by necessary attractions, draw off the noisy and frivolous part of the audience from the grave and sober hearers. The grand saloon is eighty-six feet long, circular at each extremity, and separated from the box-corridors by the rotunda and grand staircase. It has a richly gilt stove at each corner, over which are finely imitated black and yellow-veined marble slabs as pedestals in the niches. The ceiling is arched, and the general effect of two massy Corinthian columns of verd antique at each end, with ten corresponding pilasters on each side, is grand and pleasing. The rooms for coffee and refreshments at the ends of the saloon, though small, are very neat; they consist of recesses, Corinthian pilasters, four circular arches supporting domes with sky lights, from which glass lamps are suspended. On the north side of the theatre is the wardrobe. The retiring rooms for the stage boxes are decorated with rich crimson carpets, and with deep crimson embossed paper. The private boxes have no anti-chambers.—We have now to notice the pit, orchestra, and stage: there are seventeen rows of seats in the pit, with four short ones, in consequence of the orchestra making two projections into it. The orchestra is about eight feet wide, and extends nearly the whole width of the pit. The stage is about thirty-three feet wide, the proscenium nineteen and a half, and the whole constructed so as to render the circular appearance of the theatre nearly complete. The part usually appropriated to doors, is occupied by two very fine and large lamps, with tripods on triangular pedestals; each lamp contains a circle of small burners, on the principle of Burton's lamps. Over the lamps are two stage boxes on each side, forming an acute angle with the stage, and above them are niches with statues. The space over the side boxes, and ranging with the upper gallery, is left entirely open; hence the more perfect transmission of sound to the remotest parts of the house, where the lowest whisper may be distinctly heard. Between the pedestal lamps and the curtain on each side is a massy Corinthian column of verd antique, with a gilt capital supporting the arch over the stage, in the circle of which are the arms of his majesty. Corresponding with these columns are three pilasters, ornamented

with connected rings entwined with grapes and vine leaves, all richly gilt. Some, perhaps, may object to so much gilding on the stage and front of the boxes, in a house where simplicity and plainness are conspicuous; but it ought to be remembered, that performers still wear embroidered dresses, and consequently require the adjacent objects to be uniform with their costume and character. The pannel which joins the curtain is of a fine lilac colour, and contrasts advantageously with the green column and gilt ornaments. The theatre itself is a master-piece of art, and an ornament of the metropolis. The *coup d'œil* is delightful beyond the power of description. It certainly has no rival in England, or perhaps in the known world, for beauty, completeness, and magnificence. The architect, Mr. WYATT, need envy no other artist, living or dead, after exhibiting this happy specimen of his taste and genius.

THE DRAMA.

—Whilst the Drama bows to Virtue's cause,
To aid her precepts and enforce her laws,
So long the just and generous will befriend,
And triumph on her efforts still attend. —Brook

PARIS THEATRES.

July 1.

Ambigu Comique.—A Vaudeville of one act, entitled *Le Tuteur Trompé, Battu, et Content*, has been produced at this theatre. The subject is taken from one of Lafontaine's tales with the same title, saving and except the change of one word for the sake of *bienséance*. The scene is laid in an antique baronial castle, in the good old times of chivalry and crusading. The proprietor, Cesar de Batignoles, a grim and grizzly personage, turned of sixty, is guardian to Azeline, a young and tender *demoiselle*, whose better part (in his opinion) her riches, he is so enamoured with, that he resolves to secure to himself the future harvest of her tenderness. For this purpose, he has recourse to the most approved bolts, and bars, and padlocks of the locksmiths of those days. But notwithstanding these iron assurances, his mind still misgives him, and he is looking out with great anxiety for the arrival of a trusty squire, recommended him by one of his friends as a very Argus for female frailties, and in a word, a male duenna of the first water. Azeline, on her part, has not been idle, and has contrived, notwithstanding the strict *surveillance* under which she is kept, to get up a little affair of the heart with a handsome young page yeelped Olivier. The amorous page on hearing of the expected arrival of the trusty squire, takes the liberty of intercepting him on the road, and by the mingled effect of menaces and gold, gets him to transfer his costume and his letters of introduction to him. Under the disguise of this duenna in jack-boots, Olivier presents himself before the jealous old guardian, declaims most eloquently on the theme of "frailty, thy name is woman," and shows himself so profoundly skilled in all the tricks and turns of that wily sex, that the old gentleman looks on him as the phoenix of *surveillans*, and immediately instals him into that honourable place. Azeline, to seal up the eyes of the old feudal square-toes still more hermetically, complains to him in a short time, that this so vaunted Argus has had the temerity to make love to her. The guardian, to have ocular demonstration of this domestic treason, resolves to put on female attire, and repair instead of Azeline to the rendezvous she had promised the squire.

This he accordingly does, when Olivier makes a most moving declaration of his passion, to which the guardian affects to give a favourable hearing, on which the pretended squire, changing his tone, reads the supposed Azeline a most rude moral lesson, and upbraids her with the atrocity of thus deceiving a tender and respectable guardian, and warned to an excess of indignation by his own eloquence, he seizes the branch of a tree and soundly belabours the supposed faithless *demoiselle*. Old Batignoles though smothering under the weight of the blows, yet takes them kindly as a proof of the trustworthiness of his squire. But he is soon aroused from his dream of security, by bursts of laughter from Azeline and some companions of Olivier. This pleasant story has been very skillfully put *en scène* by Messrs. Hubert and Maréchalle, and met with complete success. Cheri, Dubursal, Mlle. Eléonore, ably seconded the author's intentions, and secured, in no little degree, the favourable reception of the piece.